

CISTERCIAN STUDIES SERIES: NUMBER TWO HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR

CAN A SEAMLESS GARMENT  
BE TRULY TORN?



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# CAN A SEAMLESS GARMENT BE TRULY TORN?

Questions Surrounding  
the Jewish-Catholic Löb Family, 1881–1945

Peter Steffen and Hans Evers

Translated from the Dutch by  
Sr. Joanna Dunham, OCSO



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## Het erge

*Zie je, nu is het erge echt gebeurd;  
het kan me al veel minder schelen,  
ik zeg nog: liever jouw ogen een halfuur  
dan duizend wonderen's eeuwige duur,  
maar terwijl ik het zeg  
meen ik het niet meer echt.*

*Nu zou ik dus moeten beginnen te rouwen  
mijn kleren scheuren en schreeuwen van pijn  
want dat het me minder schelen kan  
is erger dan eeuwig verdriet zou zijn.*

—Judith Herzberg, *Soms vaak*, Uitgeverij De Harmonie, Amsterdam 2004

## The Bad Thing about It

*Don't you see? Now what is bad has really happened;  
it already matters much less to me,  
I still say: rather your eyes for half an hour  
than the eternity of a thousand wonders,  
but while I'm saying it  
I don't really mean it anymore.*

*So now I should begin to mourn,  
tear my garments and scream with pain  
for the fact that it can matter less to me  
is worse than eternal sorrow would be.*



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## PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL DUTCH EDITION

**A** number of years ago, we, the superiors of Koningsoord and Koningshoeven, commissioned the authors of this book to write a pamphlet about the Löb brothers and sisters, our own brothers and sisters in monastic life. This was due to the continued interest being shown them by our own communities as well as by others. During the course of their research, however, it quickly became evident that a pamphlet would be insufficient to tell the story of their lives and deaths. The pamphlet became a book we are now publishing, and not without a certain sense of pride.

We are grateful to the authors for the particularly fine way in which they have placed the lives of our fellow monks and nuns within the broader context of their extended family and their historical times. The story of Lutz and Jenny Löb's conversion, and the resulting situation in which they and their children found themselves, sheds light on an entire family that fell under the spell of Trappist life. The too-long untold stories of Paula and Hans Löb, who did not become members of our monastic communities, have now been given a place as well. And by not isolating our brothers and sisters from their fellow members of the Jewish race, justice has been done to all the victims of the Jewish extermination.

In 2005, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* (the Vatican II document concerning relations with non-Christian religions), the Dutch bishops wrote a pastoral letter describing the characteristics of dialogue between Judaism and Christianity:

If Jews and Christians want to converse with each other, and with others as well, concerning questions of meaning and ethics, then a dialogical attitude is absolutely essential. Such an attitude is characterized by a readiness to learn, by self-criticism, by listening, seeing, and well-considered actions. In addition, such a dialogue requires practice—we have to continue practicing.

We hope that this book, which witnesses to the above-mentioned characteristics, will contribute to this dialogue.

The lives of our fellow brothers and sisters were made exceptional by means of the tragic fate they shared with all the Jews. Unexpectedly and without being asked, they were suddenly confronted with their Jewish ancestry, which had played little or no role in their own lives up to that point, but which then became decisive for the occupying forces. Their story is also the story of so many known and unknown Jews who were victims of this incredible annihilation.

Stories are passed on, so there's a danger that they may begin to take on a life of their own: in the case of our Löb brothers and sisters, this has often done violence to the historical truth. This book will do justice to this unique story by presenting the historical facts while disempowering the false reports and hagiographic figments of imagination. The role played by our own communities in the stories of the lives of the Löb brothers and sisters will also be discussed.

If “forgetting is exile and remembrance is redemption,” then we hope this book will contribute to the redemption of the story of the life of the Löb family, freeing it from the web of all the inaccurate tales that have been told over the course of many years. To the extent that we, as monastic communities, have played a role in these tales, we hope to be able to offer our apologies by means of this publication. The Löb family was and remains unique in the way in which all the members of the family, in their successes as well as in their failures, tried to live out their humanness. Their faith—Christian

for the children, both Jewish and Christian for the parents—was of crucial importance in this process.

We would like to express our appreciation to both authors, Hans Evers and Peter Steffen, who have fulfilled our request with a special sense of commitment. We would also like to thank all those who have contributed in any way to the realization of this publication.

Sister Benedict Thissen, abbess  
Koningsoord Abbey

Brother Bernardus Peeters, abbot  
Koningshoeven Abbey



## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

**B**efore you lies the English translation of a remarkable book. First of all it is the history of three Trappist brothers and three Trappistine sisters of Jewish background, but it also treats the broader context of their story. This English edition has been published primarily in order to make the original Dutch version available to our brothers and sisters of the Order. However, since many persons have been touched by the events of the Second World War, it will probably be of interest to readers outside the Order as well.

We are grateful for the efforts of Sister Joanna Dunham, who has translated this work with meticulous care. We also thank Sister Clare Boudreau of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Crozet, Virginia, who reviewed the translation.

May this book contribute to a better understanding of the history of Jewish Catholics before and during the Second World War.

Sister Benedict Thissen, abbess  
Koningsoord Abbey

Brother Bernardus Peeters, abbot  
Koningshoeven Abbey



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**H**ere we would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the abbot and abbess for entrusting us with this research project, the extent of which we could not have imagined a few years ago. We also thank Paula and her family for their interest and cooperation.

This is a platitude, but it is true for both of us: this study, along with all the literature we have read in order to obtain an idea of the changing historical contexts, has been formative for us as well, not only in the process of (academic) research, but also in cultivating an interest in Jewish and Catholic history in the Netherlands during the past century, especially concerning the shocking events that occurred during the war.

We were privileged to be able to cooperate in doing this research, which we both enjoyed, and we now offer the results to a broader public.

Hans Evers and Peter Steffen  
2008



## ABBREVIATIONS

Akh	Archives of Koningshoeven Abbey
Ako	Archives of Koningsoord Abbey
EK	Eucharistische Kruistocht; Eucharistic Crusade
KA	Katholieke Actie; Catholic Action
Kadoc	Katholiek Documentatiecentrum België; Catholic Documentation and Research Centre, Louvain, Belgium
KDC	Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen; Catholic Documentation Centre, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
KJV	Katholieke Jeugd Vereniging; Catholic Youth Movement
Nespico	Nederlandsche Spitsbergen Compagnie; Dutch Spitsbergen Company
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei; National Socialist German Workers' Party
O.Cist.	Ordo Cisterciensis; Cistercian Order of the Common Observance
OCR	Ordo Cisterciensium Reformatorum; Order of Reformed Cistercians, the official name of the Trappists in the early twentieth century
OCSO	Ordo Cistercien Strictioris Observantiae; Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, also known as Trappists and Trappistines
OFM	Ordo Fratrum Minorum; Order of Friars Minor, or Franciscans

OFMCap	Ordo Fratrum Minorum Capucinatorum; Capuchins
OMO	Ons Middelbaar Onderwijs, Onderwijsstichting Noord-Brabant; “Our Secondary Educational System,” an Educational Federation in North Brabant
OP	Ordo Fratrum Predicatorum; Order of Preachers, or Dominicans
OSB	Ordo Sancti Benedicti; Order of Saint Benedict, or Benedictines
RKSP	Rooms-Katholieke StaatsPartij; Roman-Catholic State Party
SJ	Societas Jesu; Society of Jesus, or Jesuits
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands; Social Democratic Party of Germany

## INTRODUCTION

In 1988, after her husband Harrie had died, Paula van Broekhoven-Löb moved from Valkenswaard to Berkel-Enschot, near the Trappistine<sup>1</sup> monastery of Our Lady of Koningsoord, where she had spent a few months as a novice<sup>2</sup> in 1937. At that time, three of her sisters had also been living in that monastery, while three of their brothers were members of the Trappist community in the nearby monastery of Our Lady of Koningshoeven. Paula then renewed her contact with the group of sisters presently living in the monastery, including a few who were her own age and who had known her

1. Trappistines: the feminine branch of the monastic order commonly known as the Trappists, who are part of the Cistercian Family of monasteries. The official name of the order in the early twentieth century was *Ordo Cisterciensium Reformatorum* (Order of Reformed Cistercians), abbreviated as OCR. The order is now officially named *Ordo Cisterciensium Strictioris Observantiae* (Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance), abbreviated as OCSO, with “strict observance” referring to a strict observance of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Another member of the Cistercian Family is *Ordo Cisterciensis*, abbreviated as O.Cist. and referred to as the “Common Observance.” The Cistercians, in turn, resulted from a reform movement within the *Ordo Sancti Benedicti* (Order of Saint Benedict), abbreviated as OSB. The monastic life in community lived in all of these monasteries is based on the Rule of Saint Benedict of Nursia. An “abbey” refers to an established, self-supporting monastic community under an abbot or abbess.

2. Novice: someone who has been accepted for the official trial period which precedes making monastic vows (profession) and full reception into the monastic community.

and her birth sisters from before the war. They also knew what had happened during the war, that Paula was the only survivor in the Löb family, and that Paula's parents had been converts from Judaism; but beyond what was included in a number of hagiographically<sup>3</sup> tinged documents, nothing more was known, either within the monasteries or without. Paula herself, for that matter, had trouble with the distorted images of her brothers and sisters that were reflected in those hagiographic documents. Up until then, she had never said much about the family in which she had grown up, her parents' zeal for the faith, her brothers and sisters who were entering the monastery and what that meant for the atmosphere in their home, the deportation of her brothers and sisters, or her own time underground. Now—many years later—she did feel a need to tell her story, and the abbess of Koningsoord, Sr. Benedict Thissen, recognized that fact. She put Paula in contact with Peter Steffen, who gradually won her confidence, and Paula agreed to work together with him, should there ever be a serious, careful study of her family. Several paths were now beginning to converge.

### **The Need for a New Pamphlet**

In the 1990s, Peter Steffen was approached by Abbot Korneel Vermeiren of Koningshoeven and Abbess Benedict Thissen of Koningsoord, with a request to research the possibilities of composing a new pamphlet about the monks and nuns of the Löb family who had died during World War II. In the eyes of the abbot and abbess, the existing German and Dutch texts were dated and, for that reason, no longer satisfactory. In their request, the abbot and abbess were also inspired by Trappists and Trappistines around the world, who wanted to issue a new text that could be distributed internationally.

Peter Steffen had already been involved with the monastic family of Benedictines, Cistercians, and Trappists for quite a while and was

3. Hagiography: writings about saints; an idealized portrayal of someone's life.

servicing (as a layman, unaffiliated with any of the orders) as editor of the periodical *Monastieke Informatie* (Monastic Information).<sup>4</sup> He was given access to the archives of both monasteries, in order to ascertain what kind of primary sources were available regarding the monks and nuns of the Löb family. While making an initial inventory, it soon became clear that it would take just as much work to study the sources and make a selection of the material to be used for a pamphlet as it would to do an in-depth study for a broader-based publication.

During this phase, Peter Steffen approached Hans Evers, initially asking him to write a text based on documentation Steffen would provide. Discussions concerning the available source material led to the realization that the perspective of the research really needed to be broadened in order to place the events in the lives of the Löb monks and nuns within the larger context of their extended family and Jewish ancestry, the atmosphere created by their parents, whose lives were marked by conversion and zeal for the faith, their own monastic life, and the circumstances during the war. Therefore the scope of the research was extended to embrace a longer period of time and more persons: the story of their ancestry would reach back into the nineteenth century, to the Eifel area of Germany, as well as the Netherlands. The actual story would include all the members of the Löb family: the parents, Lutz and Jenny, along with all eight of their children, and possibly their foster child, Marietje Netten, as well. This broader perspective was discussed with the abbot and abbess, which led to an ample research prospectus within which the desired broader approach was honored.

### **A Twofold Mandate from the Monasteries**

First of all, the researchers were asked to inventory all possible original source material and to study it. Based on this study, a

4. In 2008, *Monastieke Informatie* was reorganized and is now published in another format under the title: *De Kovel. Monastiek tijdschrift voor Vlaanderen en Nederland* [The Cowl: Monastic Periodical for Flanders and the Netherlands].

historically responsible and verifiable account of the Löb family was to be written, with their Jewish ancestry being one of the thematic lines.

Second, critical research was to be done regarding the impressions that had been formed of this family, especially those members of the family who had entered the monasteries. An analysis of this story tradition and the commemorative culture would then be confronted with the images revealed during the study of the primary sources, which in turn would indicate a direction for the continuing tradition of remembering and commemorating. Central to this process was the conviction that it should no longer be a matter of hagiography.

### **Written Sources and Oral History**

Research in the archives of both monasteries was the starting point, but it quickly became clear that information would also have to be sought outside the monasteries. Many persons were approached with requests for help and information. Even though the Loeb family<sup>5</sup> was a bit skeptical about what the two monasteries were undertaking—after all, the monasteries had done very little to protect the members of their family who had been deported—they did provide access to many documents and a great deal of information.

An important source of information about members of the Löb family was Paula van Broekhoven-Löb, who could tell quite detailed stories about events that had occurred during her youth. Many of her stories were pearls of oral history. She also provided us with directions about where to look for further information concerning certain persons and events. Most of the time we were able to find written sources that could be used either to verify her stories, to elaborate on them, or sometimes even to refute them. In a limited number of cases, though, we had to rely on her memories alone, since there were no written sources; nor were there any other per-

5. “The Loeb family” refers to Lutz Löb’s Jewish relatives. Lutz himself used the old German spelling of his family name.

sons whom we could consult who had experienced these events so intimately.

We had many conversations with Paula, usually in her apartment, with either coffee or Trappist beer (in its own bowl-shaped glass) and nuts, with separate little saucers for each of us because, as Paula would say, that was “*comme il faut*” (French for “good and proper”), poking a bit of fun at herself while also referring to her education at the boarding school run by the Ladies of Mary in Aalst—that is where she had the rules of etiquette imprinted on her. A personal bond grew up among us that enabled a great deal of openness but that at the same time led to the authors’ sometimes allowing themselves to be led (too much so) by Paula’s own personal experiences and memories. For example, for quite a while, Paula’s admiration for her father and her difficult relationship with her mother were determinative for the way in which the authors viewed the respective roles of the parents in raising their children; later, however, the authors were able to perceive the one-sidedness of this portrayal. Nonetheless, Paula was the preeminent oral informant for certain aspects of their family life. Of even greater importance, though, than her actual contributions while collecting information about the Löb family, was her stimulating cooperation with a view to publication.

Even though it was naturally “her story,” Paula didn’t want to be the main character of the book, because it was all about her family, her parents, her deceased brothers and sisters. As was the case with so many who had survived the war, Paula was ignored during the commemorative services and in the written texts—it was only natural that she not be included in the memorial card for the members of the Löb family, since she had survived. As survivor, however, Paula did have to bear the enormous sorrow and sense of loss that accompanied being left behind, alone. Little attention was given to this aspect, though; most of the attention was directed toward her deceased brothers and sisters. Her interest in the research project and in the researchers themselves was heartwarming, and we believe the attention her own experiences then received was really good

for her. The old bonds with the Trappistines were renewed, and it was only right that her funeral Mass on February 10, 2004, be held in the monastic church of Koningsoord Abbey. After her cremation, the urn containing her ashes was placed in the grave of her sister, Sr. Veronica. She was “home” again.

In 1925, Deetje (Marietje Netten) was taken in by the Löb family as a newborn child. She could have been another important source of oral history; however, after Jenny died in 1938, she gradually fell out of the picture, and after the war she had very little contact with Paula or any other members of the family. In the framework of this research project, Peter Steffen did have one conversation with her in 1998, but by then she either could or wished to remember very little of the period 1925–1938, which she had spent with the Löb family. She died on November 3, 2006.

There were also conversations with other persons in the context of this research, and these conversations regularly led to the discovery of further documentation that could be used to verify information that had been acquired orally. A list of the persons with whom we spoke and/or with whom we corresponded is included in the bibliography of primary sources and literature at the end of this book.

## **The Conversion Story**

The conversion of Lutz Löb and Jenny van Gelder from Judaism to the Catholic faith brought about a crucial change of course in the story of the Loeb clan and the Löb family. Lutz and Jenny were baptized in 1907, which would place them within the range of Paul Luykx’s study of Catholic converts in the Netherlands during the period 1880–1960.<sup>6</sup> Luykx emphasizes the influence of social developments on the conversion of prominent personages in the scientific

6. P. Luykx, *Daar is nog poëzie, nog kleur, nog warmte. Katholieke bekeerlingen en moderniteit in Nederland 1880–1960* [There is still poetry, color, warmth: Catholic converts and modernity in the Netherlands 1880–1960] (Hilversum, 2007).

and cultural community, offering a sociological classification of the various types of converts based on externally perceptible motives. He looks, as it were, from the outside to the inside, and then describes a cultural elite. We place more emphasis on the personal, interior, spiritual journey of Lutz and Jenny, which led to their conversion and continued to influence their lives, being of decisive significance for the choices which were determinative for the lives of their children. Lutz and Jenny didn't belong to the cultural elite of their day, even though they did have contact with several well-known personages, such as Frederik van Eeden, Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren, Herman de Man, and Anton van Duinkerken.

### **The Story of a Family**

A number of studies and historical novels use the story of a family or clan as a basis for sketching a broader characterization of an era: the "little history" of a few persons is placed within a broader context, or more general social trends are illustrated by their particular manifestations within a story covering several generations. P. W. Klein wrote a two-volume work about the Roet family and his own family, approaching history as an interaction between structural changes and personal acts, and revealing how the dramatic events of the twentieth century played differing roles in the lives of two Jewish families.<sup>7</sup> *Buddenbrooks* by Thomas Mann and, more recently, *Het lot van de familie Meijer* (The fate of the Meijer family) by Charles Lewinsky (originally published in 2006) are exponents of the literary genre "family history."<sup>8</sup> More closely related to our study is the

7. P. W. Klein, *Kaddisj voor Isaïc Roet (1891–1944). Twee familiegeschiedenissen uit de twintigste eeuw* [Kaddish for Isaac Roet (1891–1944): The stories of two twentieth-century families] (Amsterdam/Antwerp, 2001). "Kaddish" refers here to the commemorative prayer recited when a parent or close relative dies.

8. The parallels between the five successive (fictional) generations of the Jewish Meijer family and those of the (historical) Leib/Loeb family during the same period (1870–1945) are worthy of note. We'll just mention the

book *Die Ehrlichs. Die Geschichte einer jüdischen Familie* [The Ehrlichs: The Story of a Jewish Family], by Simson Kreutner (Leipzig, 1996). In the Netherlands, the first volume of the two-part series written by Evelien Gans, entitled *Jaap en Ischa Meijer. Een joodse geschiedenis 1912–1956* [Jaap and Ischa Meijer: A Jewish History, 1912–1956] (Amsterdam, 2007), offers a fascinating story based on the lives of father and son Meijer, revealing the shocking events and mental changes which were taking place among Dutch Jews during the twentieth century. In contrast to these studies, however, we are actually presenting the story of a family against the background of the Jewish *Großfamilie* (extended family) as well as that of the flourishing Roman Catholic life of the zealous faithful during the interwar period in the Netherlands. The family life of Lutz and Jenny Löb took place between the two poles of Judaism and Catholicism, including the sometimes tension-filled relations between these two religions.

Precisely here, at this point of tension, the encyclopedic study by Marcel Poorthuis and Theo Saleminck proved to be significant for us: *Een donkere spiegel. Nederlandse katholieken over joden, 1870–2005. Tussen antisemitisme en erkenning* [A Dark Mirror: Dutch Catholics about Jews, 1870–2005. Between Anti-Semitism and Acknowledgment] (Nijmegen, 2006).

One of the main characters in the biography of this family is Lutz Löb, who was born in 1881. We are taking that year as the starting point for our story, with the understanding that we will also give an abbreviated account of his family of origin, going back to the Napoleonic age. His wife, Jenny van Gelder, born in 1879, is also a main character, and we will trace the lines of her descent as well, as far as the sources allow. We have chosen to end the story of this family with 1945, the year of liberation for the Netherlands, when the war was over. In a separate chapter, we will then treat the

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economic transition from traveling cattle merchant to the establishment of a clothing store to expansion into a large department store. The conversion motif is also encountered, along with the split it causes, in the Meijer family.

traditions of remembering and commemorating as practiced after the war, especially within and originating from the monasteries of Koningshoeven and Koningsoord.

### **The Structure of This Book**

Each chapter begins with a citation from a significant situation or event, placing us immediately within the lived experience of that period. In the final chapter, this citation is replaced by a photo, since in that chapter the images and impressions which were being formed hold a central place.

We chose a predominantly chronological arrangement; however, in chapter 4 we combine this with a thematic perspective, enabling us to describe what happened to the various members of the family during the period 1922–1938, when the children were beginning to move away from their parents' home and were growing up, each in his or her own way. The bonds with the extended family are in the background, with the immediate Löb family being in the foreground: sometimes it becomes quite clear how far removed this family was from the Jewish familial bonds, with the connections being quite thin.

In the first chapter, the emphasis is totally on their Jewish ancestry. After that, we consider the process of conversion of Lutz and Jenny, with their baptism and marriage being a provisional pinnacle. In the third chapter, the Löb family finds itself outside the field of vision and the social control of the extended family, which at that point still doesn't know that Lutz and Jenny have converted to the Catholic faith. It is during this period that the family grows to include eight children, enjoying a certain material prosperity; however, a financially irresponsible undertaking reduces the family's wealth to a sober style of life with long-term, oppressive debts. The fourth chapter is complex, due to the fact that many varied and divergent events occurred during the period 1922–1938, with the lives of the various members of the family increasingly taking place in separate locations.

The dominant element in this period is the very strong bond which was formed between the family and the contemplative<sup>9</sup> monastic life of the Trappists and Trappistines. The fact that almost all their children entered the monastery confirmed Lutz and Jenny in their own faith choice and in the choices they had made for their children's futures. Chapter 5 treats the war period: Lutz and Jenny had already died when the persecution of the Jews and the occupation of the Netherlands cruelly infringed upon the lives of their children. Their Jewish ancestry was the reason for their persecution, and this formed a bond between them and their Jewish relatives in the Loeb and Van Gelder families—the group of survivors was small. In the last chapter, we give a survey of the impressions created by the memorial services and other literature after the war, adding critical, marginal comments and pointing out the distortions introduced in function of propaganda for the faith. In so doing, we satisfy the second part of the mandate given us by the abbot and abbess. We hope that the story of the Löb family in the first five chapters of this book presents a historically responsible portrait, which would then allow us to consider the first part of their mandate as also being fulfilled.

### **Torn Garments**

“And Jacob tore his garments, wrapped sackcloth around his loins, and mourned his son for many days” (Genesis 37:34). Jews trace the tradition (called *keriah* קריעה) of tearing one's garments as a sign of mourning back to this action. When one's father or mother dies, the tear is made on the left side, over one's heart, in the outer garments which one usually wears. When one's spouse, child, brother, or sister dies, the tear is made on the right side.<sup>10</sup>

9. Contemplative life: a form of monastic life emphasizing reflection and contemplation of God in a common life of prayer and study.

10. S. de Vries, *Joodse rit en symbolen* [Jewish Rites and Symbols] (Amsterdam, 1968), 272–73.

The (secret) conversion of Lutz Löb and Jenny van Gelder, as well as their tendency to witness to their faith, led to a tear in the fabric of the family. The harmony was disturbed. Lutz's brother, Ernst, even compared their parents' sadness at this separation with their sorrow over the early death of their son Frits. Later, it was primarily Lutz and Jenny themselves who perpetuated the disturbed relationships. The tensions between Judaism and Catholicism played a very unique role in the life of the Löb family.

Many members of the Loeb and Van Gelder families were victims of the Jewish persecution during World War II, just as the children of the Löb family were. Most of them died, and the little group that survived was plunged into sorrow. There was good reason to tear one's garments. Paula was certainly not the only one who was interiorly torn by the devastating events.<sup>11</sup>

After the war, a tradition of remembering and commemorating the monks and nuns who had died quickly grew up in the monasteries. There was a tendency to embellish the stories and to smooth out any wrinkles. The images and impressions of the Löb family that were formed at that time could be metaphorically termed a woven garment: in this book, we reveal the lines and patterns of that weaving, but by confronting the tradition with actual facts, the tears in the garment come to the fore. Everything was not really as pretty and ideal as the tradition might suggest.

### **The Realization of This Book**

The initial allocation of tasks between the writers was rather quickly adapted. The actual research—such as visiting the archives, holding interviews, and studying the sources and the literature—was done by both authors, but with each giving special attention to his

11. Cf. *“Der Riß durch mein Leben.” Die Erinnerungen von Ursula Bernhardt*, Aufgeschrieben und herausgegeben von Peter Lange [The tear through my life: the memories of Ursula Bernhardt, as told to Peter Lange] (Berlin, 2000).

own particular topics within the various periods and sections. Hans Evers composed the working papers and actually wrote the story, while being able, time and time again, to fall back on Peter Steffen's precise and clearly structured documentation. Both of them assume responsibility for the final version of the text and footnotes. Peter Steffen put together a collection of photos, and both authors selected those which would be included in the present volume.

During the initial research phase, those who had requested the study were regularly consulted, with Paula van Broekhoven also being present on many occasions. During the next phase, Professor Dr. J. Jacobs, a church historian at Tilburg University, was also consulted, not only to provide guidance based on his knowledge of historical research in the field of religious events, but also because of the interest shown by the theological faculty of Tilburg University in this particularly "Brabant" history. He worked conscientiously with us to prepare this book for publication, offering an eye for consistency in presentation as well as editorial comments which could improve readability.

## THE STORY OF TWO FAMILIES: LOEB AND VAN GELDER

1783–1897

*My parents were quite liberal, not really at first, but little by little it just happened. I know from the stories my mother told me that her table service for milk and her table service for meat got all mixed up when they were moving into the city and, according to Jewish Law, they were no longer usable. But she just couldn't bring herself to destroy all her precious glassware and table service and buy new dishes.*

*I was born into a Jewish family which practiced no religion, so I grew up free of all the cares and obligations which enrich the life of a child who is raised with God and with religion. I grew up in a large family, my parents were well-off, and our life was pleasant and carefree.*

These two quotations give us a glimpse of Jewish culture in the Netherlands during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The first is from an article in which Lutz Löb recounts his conversion from Judaism to Catholicism. It was published under the name “Juda” in the Catholic periodical *De Beiaard* [The Carillon] in 1925, with the title *Uit het leven van een Jood* [From the Life of a Jew].<sup>1</sup> Lutz's parents came from a traditional Jewish milieu

1. Juda (L. Löb), *Uit het leven van een Jood* [From the Life of a Jew], *De Beiaard* [The Carillon] 10, no. 1 (1925): 25–40.

in the German countryside, but they had gradually become more and more liberal in the practice of their faith. An important step in this liberalization process occurred when the family moved into the city, where Lutz grew up. Lutz's parents were rather well-off—they had precious glassware and table service which enabled them to satisfy the Jewish dietary laws for preparing and serving meals. It seems that they still followed those prescriptions before they moved, but once they were settled in the Netherlands, Lutz's mother decided not to worry about the ritual prescriptions anymore, as a matter of frugality. Lutz doesn't mention how his father felt about this.

This chapter provides answers to questions about Lutz's origins. We will look at the liberalization of the Jewish way of life, as well as at the social emancipation and related socio-economic developments which occurred within certain Jewish communities in the course of succeeding generations. That will give us an idea of the social milieu in which Lutz Löb grew up, how he learned to view life, and the social opportunities available to him.

The second quotation is taken from the manuscript *Mijn Weg tot Kristus* [My Journey to Christ], written around 1935, in which Jenny van Gelder relates a bit of the story of her own conversion.<sup>2</sup> This text was intended to be a conference for converts who met now and then in Oosterhout, a village in North Brabant which was home to two Benedictine monastic communities, one of monks and one of nuns. For several years, Jenny helped these converts with their spiritual formation.

From this quotation, one could conclude that Jenny had no religious instruction as a child, an experience which she later viewed as a certain spiritual poverty—but she did experience her youth as carefree and prosperous. In this first chapter we will also present a

2. Akh, F Löb 2 (see List of Abbreviations). Jenny Löb-van Gelder, *Mijn Weg tot Kristus* [My Journey to Christ]. Manuscript. Typed version by Fr. Anselmus Terstegge, OCSO. The original handwritten version has not been found.

brief sketch of Jenny van Gelder's family of origin, which will give the chapter the character of a diptych.

## 1. The Leib/Loeb family

### 1.1 Moises Leib

The oldest known forefather of Ludwig, or Lutz, Löb is Moises Leib, born in 1783 in the village of Hain bij Niederzissen, west of Andernach, on the eastern edge of the Eifel region in Germany.<sup>3</sup> We do not know who Moises's parents were.<sup>4</sup> Jews had been living in the area along the Rhine for centuries.<sup>5</sup> Moises Leib was born just before the French Revolution, which propagated equal rights for every citizen, regardless of his or her religious affiliation.

3. Gemeente Bad Münstereifel, Archief Burgerlijke Stand, Overlijdensregister 1860 [The Registry of Deaths for 1860 in the civil service archives of the municipality of Bad Münstereifel] gives *Hohn Regierungsbezirk Coblenz* as the birthplace of Moises Leib. The present-day village of Hohn belongs to the municipality of Nettersheim, near Bad Münstereifel, but inquiries revealed that this couldn't have been the birthplace of Moises Leib, and there is no village named "Hohn" in the area surrounding Koblenz. In the eighteenth century, the spelling and the pronunciation of the names of various places were different from what they are today. The most probable place of birth is the village of Hain, given the fact that Moises Leib lived in Niederzissen. We are indebted to Ms. Marianne Gädtke of Bad Münstereifel for this information.

4. *Sohn von einem den Deklaranten unbekanntem Vater und von einer denselben unbekanntem Mutter*. Gemeente Bad Münstereifel, Archief Burgerlijke Stand, Overlijdensregister 1860, nr. 57. [Son of a father, unknown to the declarant, and of a mother, also unknown to the same declarant. Civil Service Archives of the municipality of Bad Münstereifel, Registry of Deaths for 1860, no. 57.]

5. Cf. E. Pracht, *Jüdisches Kulturerbe im Nordrhein-Westfalen. I. Regierungsbezirk Köln*, Köln, 1997; H.-D. Arntz, *Judaica. Juden in der Voreifel*, Euskirchen, 1983; Kl. H. Schulte, *Dokumentation zur Geschichte der Juden am linken Niederrhein seit dem 17. Jahrhundert*, Düsseldorf, 1972; Nachum T. Gidal, *De joden in Duitsland van de Romeinse tijd tot de Weimar Republiek*, Cologne, 1998; L. Trepp, *Die Juden. Volk, Geschichte, Religion*, Rheinbek bei Hamburg, 1998.

Throughout the previous centuries, Jews had occupied a rather exceptional position with respect to the surrounding Christian society. This was true not only in the Rhineland but also in other parts of Europe. Their minority position usually resulted in an absence of basic human rights, a lack of safety, a certain isolation since they were restricted to their own group, and a dependence on the arbitrary discretion of rulers. Only a few were able to attain to a position of respect by means of education or wealth. Jews were excluded from the practice of trades that were under the authority of the guilds; neither were they permitted to own houses or land. Their presence was at best tolerated, and they were often taxed for this privilege. During times of economic decline, the pressure on Jews tended to increase, usually leading to their being driven out of cities and other areas where they had settled. The strengthening of a centralized political authority provided a relatively secure legal status, even though it by no means implied an equal position within the society. The Enlightenment set the tone for the education of good, conscientious, obedient citizens: it was contrary to good reason to maintain the opinion that Jews were humanly inferior to other residents; separation and exclusion had to give way to integration and adaptation; and national authorities enacted specific laws in order to realize this. Politically, the French Revolution marked a decisive turn in the direction of integration and equal rights for Jews.

In 1791, equal rights were proclaimed for all citizens in France. Several years later, French troops conquered the territory on the left bank of the Rhine, annexing this region to the French state and extending the declaration of equal rights to Jews in the area as well. But this didn't mean that their fellow citizens suddenly viewed Jews any differently: old relationships, prejudices, and ways of viewing reality continued to hold sway for quite a long time—after all, Jews had the reputation of being shifty traders and money-grubbers. Christian accusations of Jewish deicide (the belief that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus the Messiah) and of their desecrating the Eucharist in a strange blood ritual did not come to an

end either. Even though political equality was the first step toward further emancipation, assimilation, and integration, the fluctuating political affairs of the nineteenth century eventually brought the emancipation process to a standstill. Even among Jews themselves, resistance movements grew up which worked against assimilation and integration.

These radical social changes characterized Moises Leib's youth. Initially, many residents of the Rhineland regarded the arrival of the French troops as an emancipation,<sup>6</sup> but after a while the economic situation became so bad that no one really expected much of anything from the French. Napoleon, like the Prussian kings before him, tried to regulate the Jewish communities and give them a place in society: religious practice was viewed as a private matter, so it was forced out of public life.

In 1808, Niederzissen belonged to the municipality of Wehr. That year a law was enforced requiring each person to be registered with a fixed family name in the Civil Service Registers. It is true that older names often remained in use for quite a while, but, from that date on, official documents were issued with the official registered name. Many persons chose a new name, often with a French spelling, or had such a name assigned to them by the registrars. In the list compiled at the Town Hall in Wehr, November 14–17, 1808, the names under which Jewish residents were registered include Claire Gran, Eva Haupt, Auguste Sommer, and Othon Sommer. These names were used instead of Gendel Leib, widow of Moises André; Haffel Hirsch, widow of a Moises Leib (not our Moises Leib); and Isac and Leib Abraham.<sup>7</sup>

This too was the occasion on which the family name "Leib" was officially recorded in the Civil Service Registers. The name "Leib"

6. K. J. Hoffmann, *Drei rheinische Dörfer und ihre Geschichte* (Euskirchen, 1998), 142–48.

7. U. Bürger, ed., *Niederzissen. Gemeinde-Chronik* (Niederzissen: Geschichtliches der Brohltal-Gemeinde in Wort und Bild, 1992), 496–530, here 499–500.

is probably derived from “Lev” or “Levi,”<sup>8</sup> which became “Leib” in the German dialect spoken in the Rhineland, that being a spelling of a pronunciation which was also quite similar to “Loeb” or “Löb.” In 1822, Moises signed the birth certificate of his son Salomon as “Leib Mzodid,”<sup>9</sup> using Hebrew characters. Apparently he couldn’t write in German at that time.

In 1808, a decree was also promulgated by the French government making the practice of a profession dependant on the allocation of patents issued by the state: naturally, one had to pay for these patents. Freedom of trade was restricted, and the freedom to choose one’s place of residence was once again curtailed for Jews. In addition, a regional organization of Jewish communities was established in conformity with the state’s departmental classification system.

Moises Leib lived through the fall of the Napoleonic Empire, with all the consequences that entailed. In 1815, the territory on the left

8. L. Zunz, *Namen der Juden. Eine geschichtliche Untersuchung* (Leipzig, 1837, reprinted Hildesheim, 1971); D. Bering, *Der Name als Stigma. Antisemitismus im deutschen Alltag 1812–1933* (Stuttgart, 1987); “Die Familiennamen der Juden in Deutschland,” *Stammbaum* 6, no. 7 (December 1995). See also the story about obligatory family names in Giorgio van Straten’s novel, *Hartogs keuze* (Amsterdam, 2001). There is a Jewish joke about such a compulsory change of name: when a man was required to present himself for the assignment of a new name, his wife insisted that he take all the table silver with him so that he would be able to pay for a nice, appropriate family name. When he returned quite late that evening, his wife asked him what their name had become. The man replied that, from now on, they would be called “Schweissloch” [which is German for “pore,” or literally “sweat hole”]. Did that take all day? And what had he done with all the silver? He replied that he had to go to a great deal of trouble to get the one letter “w,” and that he had to use all the silver to pay for it; otherwise they would have been called “Scheissloch” [“shit hole”].

9. Archiv Standesamt Niederzissen, Gemeinde Brohlthal, Geburtenbuch / Geburtsregister 1822, nr. 2. [Brohlthal, Niederzissen, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Births 1822, no. 2.] Mr. H. Boertjens of Zwolle tried to decipher Moises Leib’s signature for us. His given name seemed to be particularly difficult to read.

bank of the Rhine was awarded to the Kingdom of Prussia. Some of the French legislation was repealed, and the earlier stipulations regarding limited rights for Jews were once again enforced. However, the Eifel region was located far away from the center of the Prussian state, which meant that many official decrees were not implemented as quickly or as strictly in that area.

Moises married Jeanetta (Schanetta) Kaufmann around 1810. Jeanetta was born in Nickenich in the district of Koblenz around 1786. Her father was Salomon Kaufmann,<sup>10</sup> a merchant. Five children were born to Moises and Jeanetta: Abraham, born around 1815;<sup>11</sup> Frederike (Fanni), whose date of birth is unknown;<sup>12</sup> Salomon, who

10. Archiv Standesamt Niederzissen, Verbandsgemeinde Brohltal, Sterbe-Urkunde Jeanetta Kaufmann, 1848, nr. 165. [Brohltal, Niederzissen, Municipal Archives (Germany), death certificate Jeanetta Kaufmann, 1848, no. 165.] This legal document states that those who reported this death, namely, her husband, Moises Leib, and her son Abraham, did not know the name of Jeanetta's mother.

11. This is taken from Jeanetta Kaufmann's death certificate.

12. The unmarried Miss Fanni Leib died on February 28, 1893, in Münstereifel, a small town south of Euskirchen in the northwest section of the Eifel region. Her headstone says that she was 84 years old (M. Gädtke, *Jüdische Friedhöfe im Stadtgebiet von Bad Münstereifel. Bestandsaufnahme und Dokumentation aufgenommen im Jahre 2000*, Bad Münstereifel, 2000, Grabmal Nr. 49; Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Archief burgerlijke stand, *Sterberegister* 1893, nr. 11) [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), death certificate 1893, no. 11]. That means that she would have had to have been born in 1808 or 1809. According to the registry of deaths, she was born in Niederzissen as the daughter of Moises Leib and Jeanetta Kaufmann. We suspect that a mistake has crept in somewhere regarding Fanni's age. (According to M. Gädtke, mistakes were made during the restoration of a number of inscriptions on headstones. It is not possible to double-check this by consulting Niederzissen's registry of births since these do not go back any further than 1821.) If Fanni really was born in 1809, then she would not have still been enrolled in the elementary school in Niederzissen in 1827, and Salomon must have had two other older brothers or sisters, one of whom must have been the already mentioned

came into the world on January 6, 1822; Johanna, who was born early in January 1825;<sup>13</sup> and finally Maria Anna, who saw the light of day on July 11, 1826. When Salomon was born, Moises Leib was a wine merchant living in Niederzissen, but it is not clear whether he remained a wine merchant his entire life. In the legal document composed at the time of the birth of his daughter Johanna, Moises was referred to as “*Handelsjud*” [Jewish merchant]. His business affairs probably included other products as well by that time.

A small Jewish community, numbering thirty Jewish families in 1856, lived in and around Niederzissen. In 1822 they were presumably fewer in number. Nonetheless, this small community had its own synagogue, a bath house, and a cemetery, so it must have been relatively well off.<sup>14</sup>

From the list of students attending the elementary school in Niederzissen in 1827, it looks as if three children from the family of Moises Leib and Jeanetta Kaufmann were enrolled there at the time.<sup>15</sup> These three must have been Abraham, Fanni, and Salomon, since Johanna and Maria Anna would have still been too young to go to school. Maria Anna Leib, who was also known as Rachel, married the wealthy merchant Samuel Levy in Münstereifel when she was still quite young.<sup>16</sup> She was his second wife. Samuel Levy was born

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Abraham. Fanni’s death in 1893 was reported by Jakob Mehrgut, the Jewish religion teacher in Münstereifel. She had never married and was living with this religion teacher at the time. She had probably gone to Münstereifel much earlier, long before Jakob Mehrgut was appointed to teach religion there.

13. Archiv Standesamt Niederzissen, *Geburtenbuch* 1825, nr. 2. [Brohltal, Niederzissen, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Births, 1825, no. 2.]

14. Cf. Bürger, *Niederzissen Gemeinde-Chronik*.

15. Bürger, *Niederzissen. Gemeinde-Chronik*, 527; W. Kolvenbach, *Geschichte der Juden in Münstereifel* (Hausarbeit zur Ersten Lehrerprüfung, manuscript), Hohn/Eifel 1962, speciaal paragraaf III.4 Das jüdische Schulwesen.

16. Schulte, *Dokumentation*, 160; Kolvenbach, *Geschichte der Juden*, 46. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Archief Burgerlijke stand: Heiratsbuch 1847 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Marriages 1847].

around 1788 and had been previously married to Christina Wolff. He had three daughters from his first marriage: Marianne, Mathilde, and Rosina. In 1846, Christina Wolff died. Not long afterwards, Samuel Levy married Rachel Leib, who was thirty-eight years his junior. Samuel Levy was a prosperous merchant who held executive positions in the local and regional Jewish community: in 1857, he was the first Jew to be elected to the Münstereifel Town Council, an indication of the extent to which the Jewish community of that time was interwoven with other residents of the town. Samuel Levy died in 1860, a well-respected man.<sup>17</sup> Rachel survived him by quite a number of years and was later buried in Münstereifel, just as her husband had been. Presumably Moises Leib, in Niederzissen, had had business contacts with Samuel Levy in Münstereifel before his daughter married him. Moises's son Salomon was later employed by Samuel Levy as well, a sign that there were close bonds between the two families.

Jeanetta Kaufmann died in Niederzissen on August 31, 1848. Her son Abraham, who signed the death certificate as "Abraham Löb," was employed in Niederzissen as a *Küfer* [cooper]. The death certificate noted that Moises Leib was then sixty-three years old.<sup>18</sup> Moises himself probably did not know exactly how old he was. When he was visiting in Münstereifel and died there on November 28, 1860, his age was recorded as being seventy-seven years.<sup>19</sup> His son Salomon,

17. Schulte, *Dokumentation*, 160; Kolvenbach, *Geschichte der Juden*, 46. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel. Archief Burgerlijke stand. Sterbe-Urkunde 1860, nr. 42 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Deaths 1860, no. 42].

18. Archiv Standesamt Niederzissen, Brohltal, Sterbe-Urkunde Jeanetta Kaufmann, 31 August 1848, nr. 165 [Brohltal, Niederzissen, Municipal Archives (Germany), death certificate for Jeanetta Kaufmann, August 31, 1848, no. 165].

19. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Archief burgerlijke stand: Sterberegister 1860, nr. 57 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Deaths 1860, no. 57].

who was living in Münstereifel, was the one who reported his father's death, and in the death certificate, he stated that he didn't know the names of Moises Leib's parents.

## 1.2 *Salomon Leib/Loeb*

It has already been stated that Moises's second son, Salomon, born in 1822, was employed by his brother-in-law, Samuel Levy. In 1852, Salomon married Marianne Levy, one of Samuel's daughters by his first wife, Christina Wolff. So Samuel Levy was then simultaneously Salomon Leib's boss, his brother-in-law, and his father-in-law, giving Salomon access to influential contacts. It can be presumed that Marianne brought a large dowry to her marriage. The married couple remained in Münstereifel, where Salomon worked as an independent cattle merchant. He would go from farm to farm, buying cattle and then reselling the animals at the cattle markets, which were regularly held in Münstereifel.

Münstereifel was a fortified town, founded in the ninth century by the Benedictine Abbey of Prüm.<sup>20</sup> In the Middle Ages, it developed into a governmental and trade center with a prosperous merchants' class, which left its mark on the town until well into the seventeenth century, as is witnessed by the beautiful, half-timbered houses. There is mention of a decline during the eighteenth century, partly due to the fact that those working in tanneries and with textiles held onto outdated methods for too long. When the French took over, Münstereifel lost its significance as a governmental center, and during the nineteenth century, it was economically overshadowed by Euskirchen to the north, which had railway connections. It would

20. Eifelverein Ortsgruppe Bad Münstereifel 1890 e.V. (Hrsgb), *Bad Münstereifel*. Schriftenreihe Die Schöne Eifel, Bad Münstereifel, 1984; T. Hürten, *Chronik Münstereifels in Daten. I-II. Stichwortverzeichnis* zusammengestellt von M. Gädtke, Bad Münstereifel, 1998; Kolvenbach, *Geschichte der Juden*; Schulte, *Dokumentation*.

be 1890 before one could reach Münstereifel with a sideline train. At the end of the nineteenth century, the town once again began to flourish, this time as a health resort, and since then it has been known as Bad [bath] Münstereifel.

Münstereifel was characterized as strongly Roman Catholic due to the presence of several religious congregations in the town. In the latter sixteenth century, the Jesuits<sup>21</sup> came and founded a secondary school. During the succeeding centuries, other religious congregations followed, and by the nineteenth century there were six religious institutes active in the town. Of course, the monasteries and the schools also offered opportunities for work, and that was another way in which they would have had a strong influence on the lives of the town's residents. When the period of French rule ended, the Jesuit school became the Royal Prussian State College. It had a good reputation, attracting many students from quite a distance, but when secondary schools were also founded in other areas, the number of students in Münstereifel dropped drastically. In the nineteenth century, the old Jesuit school was given a new lease on life when a diocesan boarding school took up residence there.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, not many more than forty Jews lived in the town. That number grew in the years that followed, so that by 1864, 133 of the total of 2,487 residents of Münstereifel were Jewish. This number would later decline. The Jews were especially active as butchers, merchants, servants, and tannery workers. In the mid-seventeenth century, a place for prayer had been set apart in the home of one of the most prominent citizens, on the main street of the town; however, the community was too small and didn't have the financial resources to support its own rabbi. From around 1835, Jews were permitted to buy land and houses, but the group

21. A religious order founded by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, often active in scholarship, teaching, and missionary activities. The abbreviation SJ is often used to refer to these religious, due to the official name of the order: *Societas Jesu* [Society of Jesus].

of well-to-do Jews remained small, as is witnessed by the fact that in 1854, three-fourths of the Jewish residents did not own their own land. Most of the Jewish families lived on one of three streets, two of which were in the center of the town and one along the town wall. The latter, “Heisterbacherstrasse” [Heisterbacher Street], was also called “Judengasse” [Jewish Alley] due to the relatively high number of Jews who lived there.

The Jewish community had to put forth a great deal of effort to provide their own (religious) education in Münstereifel. Between 1843 and 1848, the prosperous merchant Samuel Levy, together with his brother-in-law, Marx Wolff, saw to it that Jewish children were taught by a Jewish teacher. From 1859 to 1875, there was even a Jewish elementary school, in spite of the government regulations that only provided for public schools. Later, there was only a religion teacher, who often served as cantor for the Jewish community as well, and who combined these tasks with running a kosher butcher shop. A few Jewish boys attended the local secondary school, which first admitted Jewish students in 1849. In 1859, Hermann Levy, the son of Samuel Levy, graduated and went on to study medicine, but most of the students left school after three years, either to learn a trade or to use their knowledge in their family’s business.

Salomon Leib and Marianne Levy had seven children. On September 19, 1852, their first child, Eduard, was born, which means that Marianne was already pregnant when she married. On Eduard’s birth certificate, Salomon Leib’s profession was noted as being “Handelsjud” [Jewish merchant], and he signed the birth certificate with the family name “Loeb,” not “Leib.” The birth of their second child, Nathan, followed on April 20, 1854. Leopold was born on June 5, 1856—this time Salomon signed the birth certificate with “Leib.” Their first daughter, Johanna, was born on January 21, 1859. Later her name was changed to Jeanette, in accordance with the custom of adapting to the French-oriented culture of the upper class. She was probably named after Salomon’s mother. Their second daughter, Christina, was born in December 1860. She was named after

Marianne's mother, but her name was later changed to Adèle. Moses, who was later called Moritz, was born in October 1862. Rosina was born in November 1864.<sup>22</sup> Marianne died in her maternity bed on November 17, 1866, following the stillbirth of her eighth child on November 4, 1866. She was thirty-five years old.<sup>23</sup> Now Salomon had to care for his seven growing children alone.

Salomon was an enterprising and presumably rather successful merchant, but he wasn't one of the most important cattle merchants in Münstereifel, and he didn't belong to the small number of prosperous Jews who owned their own houses and land. He supplemented the living he earned as a cattle dealer, selling to farmers and at the cattle market, with a fixed income provided by a horse exchange, in which he provided horses to pull carriages and other wagons. On the southwest side of town, there was a very steep road running uphill to the village of Nöthen and then on to Aachen and Belgium. In order to pull the coaches up this hill, either fresh horses or additional horses were needed. Salomon provided the horse exchange for this road. Presumably he also stalled horses that were used by stagecoach businesses. His oldest sons regularly had to help out by walking up the hill with a coach and then bringing the extra horses back down to the stable.<sup>24</sup>

22. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Bürgerlijke stand: Geburtsregister 1852–136; 1854–74; 1856–93; 1859–8; 1860–72; 1862–59; 1864–76 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Births 1852–136; 1854–74; 1856–93; 1859–8; 1860–72; 1862–59; 1864–76].

23. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Bürgerlijke stand: Sterbe-Urkunde 1866, nrs. 62 (*Tödes Kind männlichen Geschlechts*) en 64 (Maria Anna Levy) [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), death certificate 1866, no. 62 (Dead Male Child) and no. 64 (Maria Anna Levy)].

24. Documentation, Abel and Thea Herzberg, Amsterdam. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to her grandson Mosheh, November 22, 1984. This documentation was used by A. Kuiper, *Een wijze ging voorbij. Het leven van Abel Herzberg*, Amsterdam, 1997. A copy of this letter, written in English, which A. Kuiper received, is now in P. Steffen's research documentation. Thea Herzberg-Loeb was Ludwig Löb's youngest sister.

According to family tradition, the village teacher once contemptuously rebuked Salomon's son Nathan with, "Du bist so faul wie Mist, du stinkst nach Mist und du fährst ihn auch."<sup>25</sup> From this we could conclude that Salomon Leib not only dealt in cattle but also kept cattle, either his own or that belonging to others. Such a remark might also indicate that Nathan didn't really do so well in school, but this interpretation is contradicted by the fact that Nathan was admitted to secondary school after he had completed his elementary schooling. It was probably a common expression, related by Nathan himself when he was older, expressing his pride in his ancestry in contrast to the (anti-Semitic?) contempt of the teacher.

Another well-loved family story took place around 1870.<sup>26</sup> When the Prussians demanded horses for their army for the war against the French, Salomon had to make his horse(s) available as well. On that occasion, according to him, he had met the Prussian king (who would later become Emperor Wilhelm II), who treated him rather contemptuously. Whether this meeting really did occur is doubtful, but it is true that having to hand over his own horse(s) would presumably have been a very heavy loss for Salomon. However, it could be that he had to put only the horses from the stagecoach businesses at their disposal. But in doing so, he would have lost the income from his horse exchange, and, naturally, that too implied a substantial loss of income.

The fact that Salomon could send his sons to Saint Michael's, the former Jesuit College, witnesses to his relative prosperity. Eduard at-

25. In English, "you are as lazy as dung, you stink as dung and you carry them also." Thea Herzberg-Loeb's own English translation in her letter to her grandson Mosheh.

26. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh; Abel J. Herzberg, *Brief aan mijn kleindochter* (Amsterdam, 1997), 28–29. According to A. Herzberg, the German emperor addressed Salomon Leib with the words: "Be gone, dirty Jew!" This contemptuous remark was masked by emphasizing the fact that the emperor had spoken to him.

tended that school from 1863 until the end of 1866, leaving school in the fall of 1865, but returning later for a short time. Nathan began his studies in 1864 and left the school in the fall of 1868, after completing four years of study. In 1865, Leopold began his studies, which he too pursued for four years.<sup>27</sup> It seems that Salomon regarded his sons' schooling as being quite important: that was the only way for them to get ahead in society. It was a clear sign of emancipation and integration into the Prussian social structure.

Salomon's daughters had the privilege of attending only elementary school with religion classes on the side. Nothing is known about the religious life of the family. Presumably they observed the most important dietary regulations. From whom else would Nathan have learned about using different table services for milk and meat? The fact that Salomon's sons attended the state college means that they also associated with non-Jews. As a cattle merchant, Salomon had regular contact with the predominantly Catholic population of the area as well.

After the death of his wife Marianne in 1866, Salomon married twenty-four-year-old Jettchen Meyer in September 1867. He was then forty-five years old. Jettchen had been born on December 8, 1842, in the village of Frenz, in Inden, near Düren, Germany. Her father, Joseph Meyer, was a merchant; her mother was Netta Moises. The parents of the bride filed a notarial act giving their approval of the marriage; it seems that they themselves were not present at the wedding. The marriage certificate did not mention any other family members either. Friends of the groom who lived in Münstereifel served as witnesses, none of whom belonged to the well-to-do

27. Schularchiv des Sankt Michael-Gymnasiums zu Münstereifel, *Alphabetischen Inscriptions-Buch Klassenliste 1847-1866* [Bad Münstereifel, School Archives of Sankt Michael-Gymnasiums (Germany), Alphabetical listing of registered students, 1847-1866]. This information was acquired through the assistance of Ms. M. Gädtke of Bad Münstereifel.

society.<sup>28</sup> Jettchen had relatives who lived in Münstereifel, and it was probably through them that Salomon and Jettchen met each other.<sup>29</sup>

Seven children were born during Salomon Leib's second marriage as well. Karolina and Frederike were born in Münstereifel in 1868 and 1871 respectively. Emma was born in 1874 in Gelsenkirchen, where the family had moved around 1873. Carl followed in 1876, Ernst in 1878, and Hermann in 1880. And last of all, Nanny<sup>30</sup> entered this world in 1882 in Düren, where the family then lived at Kölnstrasse 50.<sup>31</sup> By that time, Salomon was apparently concentrating his efforts on horse trading in the Düren area. A few years later, the family moved back to Münstereifel.

Eduard, the oldest son from Salomon's first marriage, was a difficult boy to manage. Around 1877 he emigrated to the United States. His younger brother, Nathan, had to accompany him to Rotterdam, where Eduard boarded the boat which would take him to the land of unknown opportunities.<sup>32</sup> Within the family, it is said that the

28. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Bürgerlijke stand: Heiraths-Urkunde 1867–10 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Marriage Certificate 1867–10].

29. Cf. Kolvenbach, *Geschichte der Juden*, and Schulte, *Dokumentation*.

30. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Bürgerlijke stand: Geburts-Urkunde 1868–79 en 1871–11 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), birth certificate 1868–79 and 1871–11]. We received no information about birth certificates from the Municipal Archives in Gelsenkirchen and Düren. Letter from Standesamt [Registrar's Office] Gelsenkirchen, September 7, 1999. The places of birth of Carl, Ernst, Hermann, and Nanny are known from the census records in the municipal archives in The Hague. P. Steffen's correspondence with the municipal archives in The Hague, May–June 1999.

31. Stadt- und Kreisarchiv Düren, Dürener Adressbuch 1882 [The Düren Addressbook from 1882 in the City and District Archives of Düren, Germany] gives: Loeb, Salomon. Pferdehändler [Horse Trader], Kölnstrasse 50. Message received via e-mail.

32. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 6; Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

reason Nathan had to accompany Eduard was to make sure that his problematic older brother really left, and that he didn't squander or gamble away the money he had for his boat fare.<sup>33</sup> It was Nathan's first time in the Netherlands, and, many years later, he recounted the experience in glowing terms.<sup>34</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century, many Jews emigrated from Central Europe to England and the United States. Sometimes the political situation was the reason, such as after the unsuccessful revolution of 1848; the social situation and the increasing anti-Semitism around 1880 were also motives to leave; but the main reason was economic motivation: there was a great deal of poverty in the Eifel region, and very little work, leaving many with no favorable prospect for the future.<sup>35</sup> After Eduard left, Nathan took on the role of oldest son in the family.

On February 11, 1887, Salomon Loeb died. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery outside the walls surrounding the town of Münstereifel.<sup>36</sup> On his headstone, his family name appears as "Loeb"; his death certificate states, "Salomon Leib, genannt Loeb" [Salomon Leib, called Loeb]. He seems to have used the spelling "Loeb" more and more often. His death certificate also stated that he was of the Jewish religion. The inscription on his headstone reads as follows (in translation):

33. A memory of Conny Heerma van Voss-Loeb, a granddaughter of Nathan Loeb. Conversation in Voorschoten, September 12, 2000.

34. Letter from E. Loeb to his son Norbert, The Hague, December 10, 1950, about the commercial history of the Loeb businesses.

35. H.-D. Arntz, *Judaica. Juden in der Voreifel* (Euskirchen, 1983). In the nineteenth century, many Jews emigrated from Central Europe to the United States of America; cf. V. Gehring-Muenzel, *The Emigration of German Jews to America in the Nineteenth Century*, Leo Baeck Institute New York, Occasional Paper 3 (New York, 2000).

36. Gemeinde Bad Münstereifel, Bürgerlijke stand: Sterberegister 1887–9 [Bad Münstereifel, Municipal Archives (Germany), Registry of Deaths 1887–9] with the signature of Jetta Loeb, born Meyer.

Here lies a man who was modest in all his doings and faithful in all his works. Shlomo, son of Mr. Moshe, died on the day preceding the holy Sabbath, on the 17th of Shevat, and was buried on Sunday, the 19th of Shevat, in the year 5647. May his soul be bound in the bundle of the living.<sup>37</sup>

Jettchen was left behind with several small children. Some of the children from Salomon's first marriage were already self-supporting. Salomon's second son, Nathan, took over a number of his father's tasks in regard to his brother and sisters, later caring for his half-brothers and half-sisters as well. Either shortly before or shortly after Salomon's death, the family moved to Heisterbacherstrasse, the "Jewish Alley" in Münstereifel. From the description which Nathan's oldest son, Ernst Loeb, gives of his visit to his grandmother, around 1890 in her house in Münstereifel, it can be concluded that they lived in the house next to the town gate, number 36 as the houses are currently numbered.<sup>38</sup> Ernst remembers it as a half-timbered house with a big kitchen and a brick oven. It was built against the wall of the town and had a so-called Berggarten [Mountain Garden], which you could reach via the attic of their house by crossing a wooden bridge. This garden ran high along the wall of the town, behind the

37. M. Gädtke, *Jüdische Friedhöfe*, Grabmal-Nr. 54. Translation of the Hebrew inscriptions by Mr. H. Boertjens, MA, of Zwolle. This inscription had been later restored, and presumably some of the Hebrew characters were incorrectly modified. During Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, in 1938, the Jewish cemetery was vandalized.

38. M. Gädtke, *Hausgeschichte Heisterbacherstrasse 38*, letter of January 20, 2001, to H. Evers, making use of data from the Land Registry Office and the Bad Münstereifel Municipal Archives. What is interesting in this regard is the novel *Marie* by Renate Günzel-Horatz, published by Patmos Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2000, which is partially based on historical research. The author recounts the history of the family which lived in houses 46 and 48 on Heisterbacherstrasse during the war. The houses the novelist is describing were numbered 36 and 38 in the days of Salomon Loeb and Jettchen Meyer.

yards of the other houses. Grandma Jettchen also had a vegetable garden outside the town gate, das Bachgärtchen [The River Garden] that ran along the banks of the little Erft River. Ernst and his Grandma Jettchen's children (his aunts and uncles, who were about the same age as he was) bathed in that little river on Friday evenings before the Sabbath began. They had to bathe in long robes because it was strictly forbidden to swim in the nude or in a swimsuit in Catholic Münster-eifel.<sup>39</sup>

After World War I, Jettchen followed her children to the Netherlands, where she lived with her oldest daughter Karolina in Haarlem. She died in 1929 in Amsterdam.<sup>40</sup>

### 1.3 *Nathan Leib/Loeb*

After completing his schooling, Nathan, the second son of Salomon Leib/Loeb and Marianne Levy, was apprenticed to his uncle, Sigmund Simonson, who lived in Elberfeld near Wuppertal and was married to Mathilde Levy, a sister of Nathan's mother, Marianne.<sup>41</sup> There was a rather large, liberal Jewish community in Elberfeld which had adapted itself to the German culture in many respects. The first Jewish families had come to Elberfeld around 1800. In the period between 1860 and 1880, the number of Jewish residents increased greatly, so that by around 1885 the community numbered about 1250 persons.<sup>42</sup> Simonson had a textile business in Elberfeld, where he used production methods that had been developed in the

39. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 5.

40. Documentation, P. van Broekhoven-Löb, H. van Broekhoven, Family Tree of the Loeb family. This Family Tree is largely based on oral transmission of information among family members.

41. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 8–9.

42. Information regarding the present-day Elberfeld, part of the municipality of Wuppertal, can be found on the website of the municipality: [www.wuppertal.de](http://www.wuppertal.de). Further, in E. Pracht, *Jüdisches Kulturerbe in Nordrhein-Westfalen. II. Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf* (Cologne, 2000), 283–97.

United States: while other businesses were still producing clothing by hand in the homes of the workers, Simonson had already split up the various tasks of the production process and was using an assembly-line method with the help of machines.

Simonson's level of production reached the point that he needed a network of warehouses and sales outlets to market his products. Since his own children were not really very interested in the business, he encouraged other relatives to come and work for him for a while, and then move on to other places and set up outlets there. That is how Nathan came to be his uncle's apprentice, so that he could become familiar with the production process and then, later, set up his own business. Within a few years, he had learned enough to be able to strike out on his own. With this in mind, he moved to Euskirchen, where there were already several clothing establishments, including the one belonging to his relatives, the Wolff family. Nathan opened his clothing and textile warehouse in Euskirchen in 1877, and announced that fact with advertisements in the regional newspaper.<sup>43</sup>

Shortly before moving to Euskirchen, Nathan married Lina Rubens. She was a daughter of Ruben Rubens and Hanneken (Hannchen) Strauss,<sup>44</sup> born in November 1854, in Gelsenkirchen. Nathan probably met her there, when Salomon Leib and Jettchen Meyer moved their family from Münstereifel to that city around 1873. Lina's father had originally worked as a peddler in Gelsenkirchen; later he opened a dry goods store in Düsseldorf and the family moved there.

43. Stadtarchiv Euskirchen: *Euskirchener Zeitung. Kreis-Intelligenz-Blatt für Euskirchen und Rheinbach. Amtliches Publikations-Organ für den Kreis Euskirchen*, Samstag den 17. Februar 1877, No. 14, und Mittwoch 21. März 1877. [Euskirchen, City Archives (Germany), *Euskirchener Zeitung*, Saturday, February 17, 1877, No. 14, and Wednesday, March 21, 1877]. On Wednesday, April 18, 1877, a large advertisement for Leopold Wolff's clothing business appeared in this newspaper.

44. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 6–7, and also mentioned in other places. E. Loeb, letter to his son Norbert (commercial history).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were about three hundred Jews living in Düsseldorf.<sup>45</sup> By the middle of that century, social security had increased, freedom of establishment and free trade had become a reality, and the Jewish community had grown to about six hundred persons. By the end of that century, the flourishing economy had made the city quite attractive as a place for new members of the middle class to settle. By 1895, the Jewish community had grown to about 1800, so that Düsseldorf was second only to Cologne in housing the largest Jewish community in the Rhineland. Socially speaking, most of these Jews accommodated themselves to the German civil culture; religiously speaking, they were liberal. With the surge of East European Jews following World War I, a more Orthodox Jewish community came to exist beside this group of liberal Jews.

Ruben Rubens moved his family to Düsseldorf during a time when economic life was flourishing. Many Jewish residents adopted the culture of the middle and upper-middle class, pulling themselves up to the intellectual and cultural level of the German bourgeoisie. That applied to the members of the Rubens family as well, meaning that Lina Rubens grew up with the traditional middle-class values, which she later imprinted on her children. Her son, Ernst, later affirmed that his mother was not very big, but that she was quite determined and bossy, insistent about order and cleanliness, and permeated with a sense of duty, frugal living, and hard work.<sup>46</sup>

During the course of the years, various bonds between the Loeb family and the Rubens family would come to exist. Lina's oldest sister, Rosa, married a certain Theodor Spiegel, who had a dry goods business in Gelsenkirchen and later in Cologne. Their business went so well that, after a while, they could afford to retire and live in Wiesbaden. They had three children: Meta, Otto, and Wilhelm. The latter studied law, became a lawyer, and married his cousin, Emma

45. E. Pracht, *Jüdisches Kulturerbe*. II. Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf.

46. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 6–7.

Loeb, one of the daughters of Nathan Loeb and Lina Rubens. Lina's youngest sister, Jülchen, married the printer Max Klestadt. They too lived in Gelsenkirchen for a while before moving to Cologne. They had no children. At a later date, Ernst Loeb, the oldest son of Nathan Loeb and Lina Rubens, seriously considered taking over the print shop from his uncle, Max Klestadt, but ultimately decided against it. Another one of Max Klestadt's nephews, Ernst Spiegel, did take over the print shop and kept it in business until he emigrated to Palestine in 1938. In the next generation, the bonds between the Loeb family, the Rubens family, and the Spiegel family were once again strengthened by intermarriage when Meta Spiegel (Lina Rubens's niece) married Leo Loeb (a son of Nathan's brother Leopold).

Nathan and Lina lived in Euskirchen for only a few years, in part of the Becker House near the center of the city, at the erstwhile address Cöllner Chaussee 799.<sup>47</sup> In this house, which was hit during the bombings at the beginning of World War II and later torn down, their first child, Ernst August, was born in 1878. Naming their child in this way is a clear sign that Nathan and Lina regarded themselves primarily as German citizens. Marianne was born in 1880, but she lived only a short while. On November 16, 1881, their third child was born. He was named Ludwig, but was usually called Lutz within the family circle: he is the central masculine figure in this family history. On Lutz's birth certificate in the civil service registers in Euskirchen, the family name is spelled "Löb," whereas the birth certificates of Ernst and Marianne still use the spelling "Loeb." That explains why Lutz, as an adult, continued to spell his family name

47. Archiv Euskirchen [Euskirchen, City Archives (Germany)], EU II File 269: Survey of the census and housing records as of December 1, 1880; written information from Ms. Heyman, Archivist of the city of Euskirchen, Germany, letter of November 16, 1999, with the following enclosures: a map (FB05), drawings of the similar Weber House (140/7) and drawings from the land registry office (Fl. 32 and 33). Correspondence between H. Evers and Mr. Fr. Rheindorf, the present-day owner of parts of the former Becker Factory in Euskirchen.

differently from his brothers and sisters.<sup>48</sup> Ernst, Marianne, and Lutz also received Jewish names: Moshe, Miriam, and Jehoeda (also called Juda) respectively.<sup>49</sup>

In 1877, on the corner of Wilhelmstrasse and Neustrasse in the center of Euskirchen, Nathan rented a building which he used as a clothing warehouse and a store. He managed this small business until 1882, when he decided to emigrate to the Netherlands and set up a new business there.

Although Euskirchen was predominantly Roman Catholic, there was also a strongly organized Jewish community in the city.<sup>50</sup> The city profited from railway connections, which were an important

48. Gemeente Euskirchen Stadsarchief, Burgerlijke stand: Geboorteregister 1878–179, 1880–164, 1881–273 [Euskirchen, City Archives (Germany), Civil Service Registers: Registry of Births 1878–179, 1880–164, 1881–273].

49. In the *Stamboek* [Family Tree] by Norbert Leo Loeb, which he received from his father, Ernst, on October 1, 1941, loose pages are inserted with information about the children and grandchildren of Nathan and Lina Loeb-Rubens. Hebrew texts appear beside the names of the three oldest children, written in both printed and cursive characters. They were all born in Euskirchen, during the time that Nathan and Lina were active in the Jewish community there. The younger children were born in The Hague, when Nathan and Lina had no active connections with a Jewish community. It seems as if the younger children never received a Jewish name. This was written above Ernst's name: "*My son Moshe, 'may he be blessed with long life,' was born Mazzal tov at the beginning of the fifth day [Thursday] the 14th of Elul 1878. God will raise him for the Torah, marriage and good deeds. Amen. Selah.*" This was written above Marianne's name: "*My daughter Miriam was born Mazzal tov at the beginning of the ? day in the month Iyar 1880.*" This was written above Lutz's name: "*My son Jehoeda, may he live a long time, was born Mazzal tov on the fourth day [Wednesday] the 24th of Cheshvan in 1881. God will raise him for Torah, chuppah [marriage canopy] and good deeds. Amen. Selah.*" Presumably no blessing was written above Marianne's name since she died soon after birth. We express our gratitude to Mr. Jochanan Belinfante of Venlo for his help and the translation of the Jewish texts.

50. E. Pracht, *Jüdisches Kulturerbe*, I. Regierungsbezirk Köln, 341–55; K. J. Hofmann, *Drei rheinische Dörfer und ihre Geschichte*; Schulte, *Dokumentation*, 46–72.

prerequisite for increased trade and industrial potential, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century. A liberal climate reigned in the city council: contrary to the situation in Münstereifel, they were open to receiving the stream of new residents, especially when these newcomers brought business and industry along with them. In the course of the nineteenth century, the population of Euskirchen increased from about fourteen hundred residents to more than ten thousand, and the city developed into a center for textiles and leather.

When Nathan moved to Euskirchen, there were already several clothing stores, with their relatives, the Wolff family, being a prominent presence. Around 1883, there were thirty-seven textile businesses for a population of seven thousand persons within the immediate city and forty thousand persons in the surrounding area. In 1871, there were 150 adult Jewish residents, and that number would continue to increase during the following years. Many of these Jews were active in business and industry. The prosperous Jewish community owned its own synagogue, which quickly became too small for the increasing number of persons attending the services there. They considered expanding the facilities, but when the synagogue was destroyed in a city fire in 1886, they decided to build a new, larger synagogue. The majority of the members of the Jewish community belonged to the more conservative branch of German Judaism, but the trustees, who were prosperous businessmen, were liberal.

There was a sharp contrast between the two influential families, Wolff and Wallach, regarding the administration of the community, with Nathan Loeb being related to the Wolff family. In 1881, Nathan became a trustee (*parnas*) of the Euskirchen-Weilerswist synagogue community, along with Andreas Wallach and Arnold Marx.<sup>51</sup> Nathan's term of office ran through 1884, but it was cut short in 1882 when the Loeb family moved to The Hague in the Netherlands. The fact that he was a trustee of a Jewish community in no way hindered Nathan from explicitly appealing to the tastes of his potential cus-

51. Kl. H. Schulte, *Dokumentation*, 247.

tomers in Euskirchen and the surrounding area by advertising clothing especially made for Roman Catholic children who would be making their First Communion.

#### *1.4 The Loeb family in The Hague and Elsewhere in the Netherlands*

Nathan's decision to move to the Netherlands coincided with his uncle Simonson's desire to acquire sales outlets outside Germany as well.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, he had encouraged his relatives in the Wolff family to move to Belgium, where they opened clothing stores and department stores, first in Liège and later in other cities as well.<sup>53</sup> Nathan concentrated on the Netherlands, which he had first visited when he had seen his brother Eduard off on his trip to the United States. During 1880 and 1881 he had visited the Netherlands several more times, and now he began thinking about the possibility of moving there. Ultimately he rented part of a building on Noordeinde in The Hague, where his younger brother, Moritz, and his assistant, Jakob Sachs, helped him set up a business. During this time, Lina remained in Euskirchen with the children, Ernst and Ludwig. In 1882, Nathan opened his new business: selling clothing on the installment plan. He had adopted this new sales technique from his uncle Simonson, who had seen how it worked in the United States. The choice of The Hague, the seat of the government, was

52. We do not exclude the growing climate of anti-Semitism as partially influencing Nathan's decision to emigrate to the Netherlands. There were violent pogroms in Russia and Poland during those years. Many Jews from Eastern Europe sought a safe refuge in Central Europe or England or the United States. There were reports of oppression of Jews in Eastern Europe. In Germany, the arrival of Eastern European Jews increased anti-Semitic sentiments, which then found expression in political movements. Nathan Loeb certainly experienced the increasing tension. Cf. I. Schöffer, "The Jews in the Netherlands. The position of a minority through three centuries," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15 (1981): 85–100.

53. E. Loeb, letter to Norbert about commercial history.

partly inspired by the fact that many government officials lived there, persons who had a regular income and therefore would be able to make their payments on the installment plan.

Nathan Loeb's business slogan was: "Talk to Loeb and he'll take care of it." In his memoirs, Nathan's son, Ernst, while describing his father as a businessman, objected to the prejudice that Jewish businessmen were cold and hard hearted, and related how much patience his father had, and how he tried to satisfy his customers.<sup>54</sup> Abel Herzberg, who married Nathan's youngest daughter, also gives a positive image of his father-in-law, both as businessman and as father-in-law.<sup>55</sup> Lutz, however, didn't approve of the way Nathan conducted his commercial affairs—he had no desire to pursue a career in the family business. This led to conflicts between father and son, but when Lutz made it known that he wanted to further his education, his father provided him with every possible opportunity. According to Abel, Nathan was quite indulgent with his children. Abel's wife, Thea, confirmed this.<sup>56</sup>

Once the business was set up, the Loeb family moved from Euskirchen to The Hague, to Noordeinde 109. The clothing/fabric store was on the ground floor; the large upstairs area served as living space. Very few Jews lived in this area. Apparently Nathan didn't feel a need to settle in the closed society of a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. The choice of this building in this location was a sign of a further step toward assimilation and integration, as well as an orientation toward the affluent middle class. Later, his son, Ernst, would remember their arrival in that house as follows:

It was a large upstairs dwelling. The front suite, composed of two large rooms, was used for the business—shelves and display cases made of black varnished wood with gold trim. Of

54. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait].

55. A. Herzberg, *Brief aan mijn kleindochter* [Letter to my granddaughter] (Amsterdam, 1997).

56. Thea Herzberg, letter to Mosheh.

course there were mirrors, posters portraying men's fashions, and everything else proper to a clothing store. There was a courtyard behind those rooms, and a really long hallway running the entire length of the house from the front to the back—that was our favorite place to play. The kitchen and two other rooms opened onto this hallway. The last room also opened out onto a balcony overlooking the backyard, which the residents of the downstairs dwelling used. The third floor had a really large attic on the back side, and three more rooms at the front of the building, which were used as bedrooms for my parents, the children and one or another of the young aunts or uncles. My blissful first impression of our arrival in The Hague was that bright and cheery back room on the second floor, looking out over the backyard, with the table set for coffee.<sup>57</sup>

At first, the children were bathed in a washtub in the kitchen. Later, they went to the public bathhouse on Mauritskade. Then after a while, Nathan became one of the few (in those years) who had his own bathroom installed, with a large sunken bathtub and a water heater in the attic. According to Ernst, good hygiene was one of his parents' primary values—the bathroom had nothing to do with a penchant for luxury. In years to come, the Loeb's would own the entire building; then the entire ground floor could be used for the store and warehouse, and more bedrooms could be built in the attic for the increasing number of children and other family members living with them. Prior to that, the children had used the attic as a gym.

Family tradition has it that the table service for meat products and the table service for milk products, required for the observance of Jewish dietary laws, got all mixed up when the family was moving from Euskirchen to The Hague.<sup>58</sup> From a religious point of view, these table services were now unusable and new dishes would have

57. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 5.

58. L. Löb, *Juda, Uit het leven van een jood* [From the Life of a Jew], 25–26.

to be bought, but Lina and Nathan decided not to do that and, from then on, not to be so strict about observing the dietary laws. Even though the cost factor did play a part, this decision was principally an expression of the family's readiness to adapt itself to the surrounding non-Jewish culture. Nathan and Lina were now living in a foreign country, in a city, far away from the village isolation and family supervision of the Rhineland, and this made it easier for them to adapt and no longer feel compelled to observe various Jewish regulations and practices.

The commercial contacts with Uncle Sigmund in Elberfeld continued for a number of years, as well as contacts with other relatives. In 1886, their son Ernst left The Hague to go stay with his great-aunt and great-uncle in their aristocratic home with house servants in Elberfeld.<sup>59</sup> Business and family relations were interwoven, and that would continue to be the case in the later commercial history of the Loeb family in the Netherlands. From the social perspective and in terms of lifestyle, Nathan's family was assimilated into Dutch society, especially into the culture of the affluent middle class, but this integration wasn't complete: they still maintained a certain orientation toward their close relatives as well as their more distant relatives in Germany.

During the first years of "The Business" (that's how members of the family referred to the store in The Hague), the family grew quite quickly. Their third son, Paul, was born in 1883. Johanna Martha followed in 1885. Emma was born in 1886 and Frits in 1888. Besides the growing number of children, Nathan's half brothers and half sisters were regularly living with the family as well. In 1882, Nathan's brother Moritz came to the Netherlands as a sixteen-year-old boy to help set up the business. Ernst Loeb remembers Uncle Moritz, together with the assistant Jakob Sachs, as a jolly pair with whom the children frequently played. They compared them to the then-famous comedy duo *Max and Moritz*, from the picture books by Wilhelm Busch. A few

59. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 8.

years later, Moritz had to go to Cologne to fulfill his service obligations as a German citizen. When he returned around 1895, he set up his own independent branch business, “De Bazar,” on the Amsterdamse Veerkade in The Hague, quite near Noordeinde. There was a special telephone line installed between these two stores in The Hague.<sup>60</sup>

Nathan’s brother Leopold also came to the Netherlands rather quickly, opening a clothing business at Ganzenmarkt 16 in Utrecht in 1886. He was married to Sybille Gumpertz, who had been born in 1858 in Aldenhoven. When Leopold and Sybille came to the Netherlands, they already had two children. Four more children were born in Utrecht, one of whom died within a year. In the census records, Leopold was first recorded as “Leib;” later, “calls himself ‘Loeb’” was inserted.<sup>61</sup> The name “Loeb” was also used for business advertisements. In 1897, Leopold became a naturalized Dutch citizen, and, in 1901, the family name was formally changed to “Loeb.” When Leopold died in 1905, his wife kept the business going until her son Frits took it over in 1910. In 1886, the business was registered as a “clothing warehouse.” In 1890, advertisements spoke of it as the “oldest and most renowned warehouse for credit.”<sup>62</sup> Apparently Leopold had used the same sales technique as his brother Nathan: selling on the installment plan.

Rosina (also known as Rosa) Leib came to the Netherlands around 1886. She lived with Nathan and Lina, where she helped out around the house and in the store. In 1888 she married Asser Cohen from Arnhem. The wedding celebration was held in The Hague, and Nathan purchased new oak furniture for the occasion. Asser Cohen was a traveling salesman for the firm “Kijl & Co.,” located in Amsterdam, where he continued to work for some time after his marriage. In the meantime, a branch of the Loeb’s business was opened in Arnhem, and Rosa was given an experienced

60. E. Loeb, letter to Norbert.

61. Written information from the municipality of Utrecht in letters dated June 5, 2000, through June 21, 2000, from the municipal archives.

62. *Ibid.*

employee, David Meyer, to help her manage this business. In 1894, Asser Cohen left the Kijl firm and, along with Nathan, set up the firm “A. Cohen & Co.” in Amsterdam. Nathan traveled regularly to Amsterdam, indicating that the two businesses were closely associated with each another.

“A. Cohen & Co.” was a wholesale manufacturing business, producing men’s clothing as a cottage industry, as was usual at that time. The other family businesses became important customers of this firm, and later, Nathan’s and Lina’s oldest son, Ernst, would become the manager and expand it into a factory.<sup>63</sup>

In 1887, Frederike Leib came from Münstereifel to the Netherlands as a sixteen-year-old girl and took up lodging with her half brother, Leopold, in Utrecht. In 1892, she returned to the place of her birth for a short time. That same year, she married the above-mentioned David Meyer (who had been the first employee in the Arnhem branch of the family business), and a clothing business was opened in Groningen for the newlyweds Meyer-Loeb.

The next one to come to the Netherlands was Nathan’s sister Adèle, who married Jozef van de Berg in 1889. He was of Jewish descent and a traveling salesman, like Asser Cohen. After his marriage, Jozef retained his job at Blok in Nijmegen, a wholesale business dealing in watches. A branch business was set up for Adèle in Haarlem, which she managed with the help of experienced employees. Once Adèle was married and provided with a way to earn her living, her sister Karolina came to The Hague, where she spent several years with Nathan and Lina, doing housework in exchange for room and board. In 1892 she married Albert Winter, and they opened a branch business in Haarlem. Nathan’s oldest sister, Jeanette, lived in Metz for a while before moving to Aachen, where she met Jeremias Bromberg, a bookkeeper for a factory that made bedding. Shortly thereafter they married and moved to Amsterdam, where Nathan and Leopold Loeb jointly set up a branch business under the name

63. E. Loeb, letter to Norbert; E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 32 ff.

“Gebroeders Loeb” [The Loeb Brothers], which was then managed by Jeanette and Jeremias.<sup>64</sup>

By 1900, the Loeb family owned a total of nine business establishments in the Netherlands, all of which were managed by Nathan’s brothers and sisters—he was apparently of the opinion that the prospects and circumstances in the Netherlands were better than those in Germany. From The Hague, Nathan continued to keep an eye on all the business affairs, fulfilling the role of patriarch within the family. On Sundays, all the relatives who managed the various affiliates came to The Hague to discuss with Nathan how business was going, and their spouses usually accompanied them. As soon as a new branch proved to be viable, Nathan turned the business over to the managers, who paid back the financial credit which Nathan had extended and from then on conducted the business as an independent establishment. Nathan retained no shares or options in any of the various family businesses.

In the meantime, the youngest children born within the marriage of Salomon Leib and Jettchen Meyer were growing up in Münstereifel. In 1892, eighteen-year-old Emma died there. Ten years later, Hermann died. Carl, who had been born in 1876, came to The Hague, and the youngest child, Nanny, moved in with her half sister Adèle in Leyden. Ernst, who had been born in 1878, found housing and employment with his half brother Leopold in Utrecht. Around 1910, when their mother, Jettchen, moved in with her daughter Karolina in Haarlem, the entire Leib/Loeb family was in the Netherlands with the exception of Eduard, who had emigrated to the United States. The family home in Münstereifel was cleaned out and sold.

In 1888, Eduard came to visit his family. On that occasion, photos were made of all the brothers and sisters who were then in the Netherlands, along with their spouses, including Eduard. Ernst Loeb was ten years old when his uncle came to visit. From his own memories, or relying on what others had told him, he later noted that Eduard

64. E. Loeb, letter to Norbert; E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 34.

was a heavy man with mutton chops. In the United States, he was a not-very-successful butcher who was married and had several children. Shortly after his return to the United States, the Loeb family received a telegram from Eduard indicating that he too, along with his family, would like to move to the Netherlands, and that he was counting on support from his family. Nathan consulted his brothers and sisters, and they discussed possibilities for setting up a business for Eduard, but actually, Nathan preferred not having his oldest brother in the area. It seems that he still did not have very much confidence in him, and that he did not see much point in entrusting the management of a business to him. So Eduard remained in the United States and became an alcoholic, dying in poverty in 1907. The Loeb family never really had any contact with his wife and children.<sup>65</sup>

### 1.5 *Nathan and Lina Loeb's Family in The Hague*

Nathan and Lina settled in a rapidly growing city. Around 1870, the population of The Hague numbered one hundred thousand residents, of whom a good thirty-six hundred were of Jewish background.<sup>66</sup> Thirty years later, the total population had more than doubled, with the number of Jews increasing to almost fifty-six hundred. As early as the seventeenth century, Portuguese Jews had moved to the city; later, High German Jews<sup>67</sup> had also come. During the eighteenth century, many of the Portuguese Jews moved to Amsterdam, which meant that the High German Jews gradually began to predominate

65. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 15.

66. J. Michman, H. Beem, D. Michman, *Pinkas. Geschiedenis van de joodse gemeenschap in Nederland* (Ede/Antwerp, 1995), s.v. 's-Gravenhage, 368 ff.; D. Houwaart, *Kehillo kedousjo Den Haag. Een halve eeuw geschiedenis van joods Den Haag* (The Hague, 1986).

67. High German: this refers to Jews coming from Central Europe but also includes Jews who had traveled East during the Middle Ages. These Jews are referred to as "Ashkenazic Jews," while those of Spanish and Portuguese origin are called "Sephardic Jews."

in The Hague. This group lived primarily in one of the poorer sections of the city. The French occupation gave rise to division within the Jewish community. The majority of the Jews in The Hague were not enthusiastic about the new political situation. Although their social position had improved and their vocational opportunities had increased, most of the Jews in The Hague, as well as elsewhere in the Netherlands for that matter, favored the Orangists after the fall of Napoleon. They were delighted when King William I moved the seat of government back to The Hague, strengthening the city's position.

Many Jews lived on a low income, and street trading was extensive. For this reason, the Jewish section of the city (simply called "De Buurt" [The Neighborhood]) was known not only for its special character but also for its extreme poverty. Many Jews were dependent on support from the Jewish Poverty Board. In the nineteenth century, the painter Jozef Israëls was a symbol of the Jews' culturally and artistically taking root in The Hague: one of the things which he painted was daily life in the Jewish district. At the end of the nineteenth century, most of the Jews in The Hague worked in retail sales and stores. There were quite a few Jewish government officials, as well as a respectable group of professional Jews working as lawyers, doctors, and university professors. There was also a small group of large-scale entrepreneurs who managed businesses such as Esveha (wholesale paper products), Thabur (metalware), and Gazan (ready-to-wear clothes). When Nathan and Lina first moved to Noordeinde, they belonged to the middle class. The more the family business grew, the more influential their economic position became, but they never did belong to the upper class of large-scale entrepreneurs. Their style of life was that of the well-to-do middle class.

The Jewish community in The Hague had its own rabbi. Berisch Samuel Berenstein held this position from 1848 through 1893. He was followed by the Talmud<sup>68</sup> scholar Tobias Tal, who remained for only a short time. In 1899, Tobias Löwenstein was appointed. At a

68. Talmud: a collection of commentaries on the Jewish Scriptures.

certain point, a conflict erupted between this rabbi and the trustees of the community over the observance of the Jewish dietary laws, which was part of the reason for Löwenstein's departure. He was succeeded in 1904 by Abraham van Loen, who remained in office until 1925. Due to the community's rapid expansion, he was given an assistant, Izaak van Gelder, in 1917. In 1925, Van Loen was succeeded by Rabbi Izaak Maarsen, who, although not a Zionist<sup>69</sup> himself, was able to maintain good contacts with members of his community who had joined the Zionist movement. In the 1930s, this rabbi strongly resisted the establishment of a liberal Jewish community in The Hague, modeled on those in Germany and the United States. Nonetheless, such a community did come to be, and Alfred Loeb, a son of Nathan and Lina, was intimately involved with it. This is noteworthy because, during this same period of time, Nathan Loeb was one of the trustees (the so-called "parnasim") of the Jewish community. One would expect that this would have led to tension between father and son Loeb, who did go their differing ways within the Jewish community, but remarkable as it may seem, there is no mention of any disagreement or noticeable difference of opinion. That could be a sign of Nathan's tolerance. It was this Rabbi Maarsen who performed the ceremonies when Nathan died in 1940, as well as when his headstone was set in place a year later.

In 1844, a new synagogue had been built, replacing the High German synagogue, which was then more than a century old. In 1879, a second synagogue was built, which was principally attended by Orthodox Jews and which remained in use until 1925. In 1925, the High German community obtained a new, centrally located building which was large enough to house the synagogue as well as various offices, the rabbinate, and a meeting room. In 1937, the community began to use the large synagogue on Carpentierstraat, named after the De Carpentier family.

69. Zionism: a movement which advocated the establishment of a Jewish state in Zion, the Jews' earlier homeland in Israël.

Even though Jewish children had been admitted to the city schools since 1798, wealthy Jews continued to provide for their children's education themselves. The Jewish community did maintain its own school for poorer children, where Yiddish continued to be spoken for a long time, but after 1857, this school was no longer officially recognized or subsidized by the government, so the Jewish students had to attend the public city schools. Nonetheless, the Jewish community did continue to provide religious education outside regular school hours. In 1881, the Jewish community could once again establish its own school, which was officially recognized by the government, and the children of wealthy Jewish citizens who could pay the high tuition attended that school. Nathan and Lina Loeb, however, chose not to send their children to that school, not because of the expense, but rather because they wanted their children to act like Dutch citizens and not be raised in isolation. The children of Nathan and Lina Loeb did attend religion classes, however, which were offered within the Jewish community.

The decline in involvement in religious Judaism, which had already been quite strong in the nineteenth century, continued to expand its sphere of influence in the twentieth century. Many Jews no longer felt religiously bound, except at certain crucial moments in their lives, and the growing assimilation was disturbing to many. In response to this concern, synagogue communities established organizations to strengthen the sense of Jewish identity, including clubs and interest groups, especially for young people as a means of nurturing their Jewish consciousness. There was also the problem of missionary and conversion activities from the Protestant and Roman Catholic side: as a defense against these, the "Mikwee Isra'el" organization was set up in 1908. Justus Tal was one of the Talmud scholars who entered into debate, both orally and in writing, with Christian missionary organizations and other critics.

A high point in the Jewish history of The Hague was the Eighth Zionist Congress, which was held in 1907. Max Nordau, the right-hand man of the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, made

the opening speech at that congress, and he took advantage of the occasion to address those attending the Second Hague Peace Conference, which was also being held at the same time. Whether that had much effect isn't really known, but it is certainly a fact that the Congress strengthened the Zionist movement in the Netherlands. Within the Loeb family, it was primarily the younger members who felt attracted to Zionism: Frits, Thea, and her future husband, Abel Herzberg.<sup>70</sup>

Nathan and Lina raised their children as Dutch citizens, accommodating themselves to the lifestyle of the wealthy middle class. Nathan learned Dutch quite quickly, but Lina had more trouble with the language. For a long time, German continued to be used within the family, and if Lina had to write a letter, it would invariably be in German. The children went to public elementary schools. Ernst remembered some anti-Jewish sentiments at the elementary school which he and Lutz attended: little boys from families of government officials and military personnel would sometimes call them names like "spekjood" [literally, "bacon Jew": a Jew who does not observe the ritual prescriptions]. The children from families who had come from the Dutch East Indies did not do that, however, and most of their playmates were from those families. According to Ernst, he and Lutz really did not have much trouble with harassment: "we all played together all the time and weren't excluded; however, the more pious Jewish students usually did set themselves apart."<sup>71</sup> By using this characterization, Ernst also reveals that the Loeb family did not belong to that group of pious Orthodox Jews, but rather to the assimilated, secularized group. Later, Lutz would write that his parents had gradually become liberal.<sup>72</sup> This is illustrated by the fact that the business was usually open on Saturdays, the Sabbath; however, this could also be viewed as simply commercial interest, without drawing

70. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh; Ako, file 427, letter E. Loeb to L. Löb, March 22, 1919.

71. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 11.

72. L. Löb, *Juda, Uit het leven van een Jood* [From the Life of a Jew], 25.

any further conclusions from the fact. The family was not too strict about observing the rules governing times of prayer and activities permitted on the Sabbath, but they did retain the traditional dishes of the Jewish dietary culture: the flesh of certain animals, such as pork and eel, was considered unclean and therefore was not served in the Loeb household.

The reason for maintaining certain traditions and practices was possibly more out of a sense that the Jewish culture should be preserved, rather than from any real religious motive. This was the case, for example, when it came to circumcising the boys. As already mentioned, the children did receive religious instruction, and the boys were prepared for their bar mitzvah.<sup>73</sup> However, the after-school religion classes that Ernst and Lutz attended left a rather negative impression on both of them:

On cold, damp, winter evenings we had to walk through the rain and snow to get to the Jewish school. We did learn to read there, but we didn't learn what the unfamiliar words meant. It was deadly boring, rattling off prayers that didn't make any sense.<sup>74</sup>

Two little booklets were found in Lutz's estate, which he had probably used for these Jewish religion classes. One of the books contains the texts of Hebrew prayers and blessings; the other is a catechism with questions and answers.<sup>75</sup> Based on this knowledge

73. Bar mitzvah = Son of the Commandment, coming of age, achieving the legal religious status of an adult. In liberal Jewish communities, the bat mitzvah, Daughter of the Commandment, is also celebrated.

74. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 12.

75. Ako file 460: *Lof- en Dankzeggingen met Nederlandsche vertaling, benevens de voornaamste daarop betrekking hebbende Voorschriften (Dinim)*, and the introduction by Philip Elte (Amsterdam, 1923), third edition; *Jesuruns Wet, vervolg op Israëlitische Geloofsleer, bevattende: de voornaamste plichten van den Israëliet jegens God en zijne naasten in onzen tijd. Ten dienste der Israëlitische jeugd*, by J. H. Pole-naar (Amsterdam, 1888).

and the private instruction received from a religion teacher, the boys celebrated their bar mitzvah. For the most part, that meant they accompanied their father to the synagogue on feast days. At home, the many blessings for various times and events were not recited, but they did use certain Jewish expressions as part of their common family parlance.

Looking back at his family life in the period from 1882 to 1895, Ernst concludes that the big feasts were celebrated as cultural memorials in their home, rather than strictly according to the ritual forms.<sup>76</sup> It is true that Father Nathan did recite the blessing for Passover, and the Seder meal was celebrated according to the ritual, but there were no other particularly religious activities. Father did go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Jewish Day of Atonement), and Mother Lina did take care of providing the appropriate cooked dishes and baked goods for those days. Friday evening, the beginning of the Sabbath, was family time—other family members often came to visit—but ritual practices such as lighting the candle and saying the prayers for the evening meal were omitted. Lutz did remember his mother baking cakes and pies then, and the children being bathed and dressed in clean clothes. When the store was closed on Friday evening, the table was set for a feast. After the evening meal, mother never did any sewing or needlework, since the Sabbath was regarded as a day of rest. During the course of the evening, aunts and uncles gathered at the home of their patriarchal brother, Nathan, for tea. That's when the cake was cut, and other treats, such as fresh fruit and dried fruits, appeared on the table.<sup>77</sup>

The family achieved wealthy middle-class status rather quickly: business was good; they expanded the range of products offered for sale to include all sorts of household articles and furniture; Nathan was able to extend credit and set up new branch businesses; all the

76. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 11–13.

77. L. Löb, *Juda, Uit het leven van een Jood* [From the Life of a Jew], 26.

children went to secondary school, and some even went on for further studies; they bought rather expensive toys for those days, such as a child's bicycle; Nathan appreciated books and paintings, and purchased them regularly.

He was a regular customer of old Mr. Blok, who had a little newsstand on the Binnenhof, and he often brought books and pictures home for us which he had picked up there. He bought paintings from young artists whom he supported, within his means. He liked visiting the Royal Library, to read there, as well as the Mauritshuis [an art museum], where he especially admired Vermeer's beautiful "View of Delft." He commissioned the young Jaques Zon to paint a good copy of that work for him and it enhanced the wall of our home for years.<sup>78</sup>

Their social contacts were primarily within their own family circle in the Netherlands and in Germany. They married other Jews, and business interests were often interwoven with the marriages.

In 1888, the family numbered eight persons: Nathan, Lina, and six children younger than ten years of age: Ernst, Lutz, Paul, Johanna, Emma, and Frits. In 1890, a seventh child, Alfred (Fredri) was born. Rudolf followed in 1893, but died a year later, and in 1897, the youngest child was born and given the name Thea. By this time, Ernst and Lutz had already left home. For a while, Selma Schimmel(p)fennig lived with the family,<sup>79</sup> serving as governess and teacher for the children while they were growing up. She came from Memel in East Prussia and later married Nathan's younger brother Moritz.

According to Ernst, his parents' home was characterized by regularity, orderliness, and peace. Lina observed the Dutch custom for her children's meals: a hot meal late in the afternoon. In the evening, after

78. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 16.

79. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 13.

closing the store, Nathan totaled the cash box, balanced the books, and came upstairs, where there was more to eat for the adults.<sup>80</sup>

In The Hague, Ernst wasn't making any progress with his studies, so he went to Utrecht and lived with his uncle Leopold for the second and third years of his secondary schooling. There he found a completely different style of housekeeping: Leopold's mother-in-law and sister-in-law lived with them, and Ernst remembers it as being lively and loud.<sup>81</sup> Ernst's studies at the secondary school in Utrecht weren't very successful either, so at age fifteen he was taken out of school and, with an eye on a career in the family business, apprenticed to Adolf Sernau, a business acquaintance who owned a factory for ready-to-wear ladies' clothing in Halle an der Saale. Ernst also worked for a company in Berlin for a while. He became ill, though, and Nathan got in touch with his cousin, Karl Simonson, and asked him to help Ernst. This son of Sigmund Simonson was leading a rather bohemian life, living off "the little that was still left from his father's business, which had really fallen off." Ernst remained in Erfurt for a while and then returned to The Hague.<sup>82</sup>

Ernst was then given a job in the new business which his father and his uncle Asser Cohen had set up in Amsterdam, as well as a room in his uncle's home. The Bromberg-Loeb family was also living in Amsterdam. Jeremias Bromberg was a man who appreciated music and cultural activities, and the Cohen family and the Bromberg family often got together: they went to concerts and theater performances regularly, or had a cup of coffee at the Krasnapolsky Grand Hotel in Amsterdam. Ernst enjoyed being included in this nightlife. While in Amsterdam, Ernst was also back in touch with his brother Lutz, who was living with the Bromberg family and attending business college in Amsterdam.<sup>83</sup>

80. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 13.

81. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 19–20.

82. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 23–31. The quotation is found on 29.

83. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 34; L. Löb, Juda, *Uit het leven van een Jood* [From the Life of a Jew], 30–31.

At the same time, their brother Paul was attending secondary school in The Hague, after which he was apprenticed to the Meyer & Günther Warehouse in Dortmund. Johanna, who was first called Henny and later Jo, attended the so-called “young ladies’ school” in The Hague, and then left for Germany, where she lived at the boarding school for young ladies run by the widow Paradies in Frankfurt am Main. Her cousin, Anni Loeb from Utrecht, was there at the same time, and they both received the formation proper for young girls coming from an affluent background.<sup>84</sup>

In March 1902, Nathan and Lina celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in The Hague. The children decorated the house on Noordeinde, and the other relatives met in Amsterdam and then traveled together to The Hague. Around noon, all the aunts and uncles had arrived and were in the front room of Nathan and Lina’s home. When the silver anniversary couple entered the room and saw the entire family gathered there, they were deeply moved. The oldest son, Ernst, recited a poem in German especially composed for the occasion, praising his parents for the way in which they had raised their children with a sense of duty. He also expressed the wish that, after their life of hard work, his parents would now be able to enjoy the fruits of their labors. As a gift from the entire family, the silver anniversary couple was presented with a silver chest and rococo silverware. Their daughter Johanna wasn’t able to be present at the celebration, but she did receive an extensive report from her brother Ernst.<sup>85</sup>

A little later, when Johanna had returned from Frankfurt, a group portrait was made of Nathan and Lina’s children. Shortly thereafter,

84. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 44–46.

85. The letter, dated March 24, 1902, from Ernst Loeb to his sister, Jo, was found inserted into the original copy of E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait]. The letter is written in German. This was the language used within the family, and Ernst probably also wrote in German because Jo was staying at a boarding school in Frankfurt at the time.

Alex Paradies, the son of widow Paradies, came to Scheveningen to enjoy the beach there, and he paid a visit to the Loeb home to ask for Johanna's hand in marriage. Alex was a traveling salesman for a diamond jewelry company. When they became engaged, Johanna was almost eighteen years old and Alex was twenty-eight. They celebrated their wedding shortly thereafter and the couple moved to Frankfurt. In their neighborhood in The Hague, Johanna and Emma Loeb had been known as "the beautiful Loeb girls."<sup>86</sup> While still in elementary school, when the school was honored with a royal visit, it was Johanna who had been chosen to present flowers to the Queen. Johanna was regarded—note well—as being the most representative "Dutch" girl in the school.

Around 1900, Ernst met Esther Wiener in Amsterdam. Nathan and Lina Loeb objected to this relationship, and Esther's guardian didn't see anything promising in an engagement either.

At this point in time, I really can't go back and accurately determine the reasons for their objections anymore. My father probably had other plans for me. It seems that I remember something about someone in Cologne going to a lot of trouble to introduce me to a German girl. Maybe there was a bigger dowry? I don't know anymore. On the other hand, the question about my position in the business was raised: even though I was the son of one of the joint owners, I didn't have any official shares in the business; so I was really nothing more than just an ordinary employee.<sup>87</sup>

Nonetheless, Ernst and Esther pursued their relationship. When everyone was invited to a party, during which Alex Paradies was to be introduced to the family as Johanna's husband-to-be, Ernst indicated that he would not come unless Esther would also be welcome. In 1904, Ernst and Esther did get married.

86. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

87. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 45.

In 1906, the twenty-year-old Emma married her cousin Wilhelm Spiegel, who was a lawyer. Wilhelm, along with his brother Otto, had visited Johanna several times at the boarding school in Frankfurt, and had fallen in love with her, but Alex Paradies was ahead of him. At that time, Wilhelm was still a student and not in a position to be considered as a marriage candidate. A few years later, he asked for the hand of his cousin Emma. The couple then moved to Kiel, where Wilhelm set up a legal practice.<sup>88</sup>

When Paul returned from Dortmund, he joined the business in The Hague and gradually took over the leadership from his father. A few years later, while visiting Ernst and Esther in Amsterdam, he met Marianne Konijn, who came from a family of diamond merchants.<sup>89</sup> In 1911, she and Paul became engaged and, at the end of the year, they married. Paul looked a lot like his father, but was without his father's expansive entrepreneurial spirit; however, he was quite concerned about the well-being of his brothers and sisters, and he did take over the patriarchal role from his father.

Thea, the youngest member of the family, who had been born on her mother's birthday (March 9) in 1897, remembered being dressed in blue sailor suits as a little girl.<sup>90</sup> These sailor suits, which were the latest style at the time, were made in the ready-to-wear factory which her father and her uncle Asser Cohen owned in Amsterdam. As a small child, Thea was a bit sickly. She would often spend the night with her older brothers and sisters or other relatives. Here is her description of one of her visits to her sister Johanna in Frankfurt:

First of all, my sister went with me to buy nice clothes and then they took me often for the evening meal to supper at the Palmengarten, and, besides that the food was excellent

88. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], passim; Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

89. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 54.

90. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

and the environment for my unused eyes like a fairy-tale, there was the most expensive playing-garden I had ever seen and I was allowed to go there as long and as often as I wished. The first years they lived in the middle of the town but afterwards they bought a nice villa on the outskirts of the town. They had two boys and two servants.<sup>91</sup>

At home, Thea grew up with her brothers Alfred (called Fredi) and Frits (called Sally). She got along really well with her brother Alfred, who went to Leyden to study law after graduation from secondary school. The image of Alfred as a military officer on a really big motorcycle is what always remained imprinted in Thea's memory. Their brother Frits, who was nine years older than Thea, was the most talented member of the family—his parents expected great things from him. After graduating from secondary school, he went to Delft to study architecture. His older brother Lutz had already graduated by that time. When he finished his studies, Frits was appointed city architect of Utrecht. He also designed a villa for his brother Ernst.

In 1916, Frits married Constance (Conny) Simons. She was “the nicest girl in town, a lawyer,” according to Thea.<sup>92</sup> According to Ernst, she came from one of the most distinguished families in The Hague.<sup>93</sup> Constance was also the first non-Jewish spouse of any of the children of Nathan and Lina Loeb. Apparently by 1916 this no longer constituted a problem for them. Obviously, her background was a really big advantage but, even so, it was Frits who had introduced the Zionist way of thinking to the family and who promoted the renewal of their Jewish consciousness.<sup>94</sup> Thea in particular would follow in his footsteps, partly under the influence of her boyfriend,

91. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh. This is a direct quotation from the letter, which Thea herself wrote in English.

92. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

93. E. Loeb, *Zelfportret* [Self-portrait], 56.

94. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

Abel Herzberg, who would later become her husband.<sup>95</sup> Around the end of World War I, when Thea was visiting her older sister Emma in Kiel, she went home on Christmas Eve, under protest from her cousin Rolf Spiegel. Thea could not reconcile her convictions about her own Jewish identity with the accommodated Judaism of her relatives in Kiel, who were celebrating Christmas Eve just like the German Christians did.<sup>96</sup> This strong consciousness of their Jewish identity later emerged in Nathan Loeb as well and, to a lesser degree, in his sons Ernst, Paul, and Alfred.<sup>97</sup> But in the period preceding World War I, it was not yet so prominently present within the Loeb household.

## **2. The Van Gelder Family and the De Leeuw Family**

Jenny (Jansje) van Gelder, the woman whom Lutz Löb would marry in 1907, belonged to a family which originally came from Amersfoort, where the first Jews who had come from Portugal had settled in the mid-seventeenth century. A few decades later, High German Jews had also come to Amersfoort. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Schaap family belonged to the governing body of that Jewish community. One of their sons, Leib B. Schaap, was chief rabbi in Amersfoort from 1847 through 1856. About that same time, a certain Abraham Jacob van Gelder was active as circumciser within the city and the surrounding area. In 1867, a conflict within the Jewish community led to a schism and a separate synagogue was built, but ten years later the two communities once again reunited.<sup>98</sup>

95. They married in 1923. This relationship will be discussed further in Chapter 3, in relation to later contacts between Lutz Löb and Abel Herzberg.

96. Thea Herzberg-Loeb, letter to Mosheh.

97. Ako file 427, E. Loeb, letter to Lutz Löb, March 22, 1919.

98. Pinkas. *Geschiedenis van de joodse gemeenschap in Nederland*, s.v. Amersfoort.

Levie David (Jehouda) van Gelder was born April 1, 1842, in Amersfoort, where his father, David van Gelder, had a butcher shop. His mother was Jansje Kobus Slager. She had already died in 1872 when Levie David van Gelder started working for Elias de Leeuw, a butcher in 's-Graveland, who was married to Esther Schaap. That's how Levi met Elias' daughter, Sara, who had been born May 8, 1852, in 's-Graveland. Elias de Leeuw had already died when Levie David and Sara got married in December 1872. Sara was pregnant at the time. Several uncles and cousins served as witnesses for the wedding.<sup>99</sup> A year later, Levie David and his wife moved to Naarden to open a butcher shop there, where several members of the Van Gelder family were also living. In 1829, a certain Izak Levie van Gelder was a merchant and the owner of a finance company on 2<sup>e</sup> Marktstraat (house number 347<sup>100</sup>) in Naarden. His father, Levie Abraham van Gelder, had also owned a bank, which Izak's brother, Salomon, had taken over in 1849, but which was liquidated and replaced by a municipal agency in 1874.

A great many of the High German Jews then in Naarden were butchers and merchants. In the municipal registries, however, the latter category included everything from the most destitute peddlers to affluent shopkeepers, and many of the Jewish families in Naarden in the nineteenth century depended on the Poverty Board for support. Between 1838 and 1874, Salomon Levie van Gelder, one of the more affluent members of the community, was the administra-

99. Gemeente 's-Graveland, archief burgerlijke stand: Huwelijksregister 1872–10 [’s-Graveland Municipal Archives, Civil Service Registers: Registry of Marriages, 1872–10].

100. The houses in the fortified town of Naarden were not numbered by street; rather, the numbering was continuous. In 1883, and again in 1899, the houses were renumbered. In 1918, the streets were renamed, and at this time, the houses were numbered by street. On the Land Registry's 1832 map of the fortified town of Naarden, house number 347 was the building on the corner of the then 2<sup>e</sup> Marktstraat and Gansoordstraat. This information is taken from the Naarden Municipal Archives, Land Registry Department.

tor of the synagogue and of the Jewish community. Around 1840, there were almost two hundred Jews living in this fortified town, but, as time went by, this number decreased due to limited housing and meager economic opportunities. In 1874, the total population of Naarden was twenty-seven hundred residents, of whom only sixty were Jewish, and these were even further divided: traditionally, there had always been tension between the Sephardic Jews and the Ashkenazic Jews. The synagogue on Wijde Marktstraat maintained its Sephardic spirit until 1886, while the Ashkenazic Jews held their services in their own homes. The Van Gelder family belonged to this latter group, which gradually increased in number and influence and in 1885 was reformed to become the Dutch-Israelite congregation. Eight Jews in Naarden were members of this new community, but that was too few; therefore, they offered payment to fellow believers from Bussum (where there was a larger Jewish community) in exchange for ensuring that the required “minyan” of ten adult men would be present for their services. A certain Marcus Haalman was appointed cantor and religion teacher for the benefit of this new community. They had their own cemetery on Kloosterstraat, and they later acquired land outside the town; however, the synagogue gradually fell into disuse, since the community really was too small. After Haalman died, services were held only on major holidays.<sup>101</sup>

Levie David van Gelder and Sara de Leeuw originally lived on Schipperstraat (house number 469), the present-day Kloosterstraat. After a few years, they moved to Markt (house number 397), the present-day Marktstraat 26. On March 19, 1873, Sara gave birth to her first child, who was given the name Elias, after her deceased father. The child was quite weak and died on May 24 of that same year. On April 16, 1874, David Levie was born. Their third child, born on December 17, 1875, was once again named Elias. Barend, their fourth child, was born August 9, 1877. Jansje, who was later usually called Jenny, was born in the house on Marktstraat on February

101. H. Henrichs, *De synagoge van Naarden. 1730–1935* (Amstelveen, 1982).

15, 1879, and was named after her grandmother. On January 13, 1882, her sister Heintje was born. Abraham followed on October 10, 1883, and finally the youngest, Elisabeth, was born on March 4, 1885. Levie David had servants working in the butcher shop as well as live-in maids for the Van Gelder family, among whom were his nephew, Arie de Leeuw, and his niece, Sara de Leeuw, who later married each other. In the course of the years, the number of servants and maids varied greatly, but this was not simply a matter of how many relatives he had, for Levie David also employed a few non-Jewish workers.

In 1886, Levie David bought house number 391 (the present-day Raadhuisstraat 1–3) for 6000 Dutch guilders. It was a corner building with stables and had lots bordering on both Markt and Wijde Marktstraat. He would have paid nine Dutch guilders per week interest and amortization. It was a large building, big enough for a home as well as a shop, and there was access to the slaughterhouse via Wijde Marktstraat.<sup>102</sup> The business was awarded the coat of arms of a royal warrant of appointment (issued to those who supply goods or services to the royal court), presumably because meat was regularly delivered to the garrison in Naarden, where troops were stationed. The Van Gelders had probably started out as kosher butchers many years earlier, but by Levie David's time, that was no longer the case. With such a small Jewish community, he would never have had enough customers to run the business at a profit—that's why the butcher shop was open on Saturdays. The means available to the Jewish community in Naarden were quite limited, so there was never any question of a flourishing Jewish religious community life there. Most of Naarden's Jewish community were very much assimilated and integrated into the secular life of the town.

102. Stadsarchief Gemeente Naarden: Kadastrale indelingen; Koopakte 1886 en Koopakte 1912 [Naarden, City Archives: Department of Land Registry; Title Deed 1886 and Title Deed 1912].

Sara de Leeuw was descended from a Jewish family which originally came from 's-Graveland and Kortenhoef.<sup>103</sup> Her grandparents were Arie Hartog Levie, who later called himself De Leeuw, and Saartje Eliasser, who was also known as Sara Elias Godfried. They had six children, and all four of their sons would become butchers. Around 1808, the family was living in a house on Noordereinde in 's-Graveland; prior to that, they had lived in nearby Vreeland. In 1850, Sara's father, Elias de Leeuw, bought a building on Koninginneweg and set up a butcher shop there. Shortly thereafter, he married Esther Schaap, also known as Heintje, who was a daughter of the Jewish butcher from Hilversum, Hijman Schaap, and Sara Swelheim. Elias de Leeuw was one of the leaders of this small Jewish community, and he made an agreement with his nephew, Hijman Izak de Leeuw, who was an advocate for the Jewish community of 's-Graveland: the shop building on Noordereinde 17–19 was to be renovated, and a synagogue and a Jewish school would be established there.<sup>104</sup> When Elias died in 1870, leaving behind a wife and five young children, his nephew Hijman bought the building, but his wife retained the slaughterhouse next door, where her son Arie slaughtered the animals. Arie had previously worked for the Van Gelders in Naarden.

In 1850, the total number of residents of both villages, 's-Graveland and Kortenhoef, was about twelve hundred persons, of whom thirty-two were of Jewish descent. For a long time, they had had a good relationship with the community in Hilversum; however, in 1859, following a conflict regarding the independence of the Jewish community in 's-Graveland, this group established their own community: they felt they had been too strongly dominated by the Hilversum

103. W. Fecken, *De joodse gemeenschap in 's-Graveland en Kortenhoef*.

104. In 1996, a commemorative plaque was laid with this inscription: "From 1858 through 1887, the former Jewish community of 's-Graveland and Kortenhoef established their own synagogue at this location." An ox's head hangs above the front door of the building (which is still recognizable as a shop building), evoking its former use as a butcher shop.

community. Family ties and complications regarding the appointment of a cantor also played a role. Hijman de Leeuw was directly involved in this conflict, since he was the owner of the building which housed the synagogue.

At the end of her life, when Jenny van Gelder was writing about her youth, she related that she had been born into a Jewish family “which practiced no religion.”<sup>105</sup> Perhaps that was putting it a bit too strongly. Religious practices were maintained from a cultural sense of self-awareness and only at pivotal moments of one’s life: circumcision, bar mitzvah, marriage, and burial. From the presence of a cantor and a religion teacher in the small community of Naarden, one can presume that the children were given lessons in Jewish religion and liturgy outside regular school hours, but there was really no possibility of maintaining a rich liturgical cult in the synagogue. The Van Gelders were highly respected members of this small community, and the cantor Haalman was certainly included in their immediate circle of friends.

Jenny’s brothers, David Levie and Elias, moved to Bussum in 1902 and started their own slaughtering business there. Elias had first apprenticed himself to his uncle Barend van Gelder in Amersfoort in 1890. In 1903, he married Selma Ullman from Düren, and they had a daughter, Louise. Elias maintained the business in Bussum until 1936, when he emigrated to the Dutch East Indies. During World War II, the family was imprisoned in a Japanese concentration camp, where all three of them died.

During the city fire in 1904, the cowsheds and the barns which belonged to Levie David van Gelder were burned to the ground, and it is not clear whether he himself was able to rebuild everything personally. On November 17, 1906, he died at sixty-four years of age and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Amersfoort. His

105. Akh F Löb 2: J. Löb-van Gelder, *Mijn weg tot Kristus* [*My Journey to Christ*].

headstone bears the usual Hebrew inscriptions.<sup>106</sup> His wife Sara and his son Barend kept the butcher shop open until 1912, when the municipality of Naarden bought the building from the Van Gelder estate for 5000 Dutch guilders. The house had to be vacated immediately; the building was later demolished and replaced by municipal buildings. In the meantime, Sara had moved in with her son David Levie in Bussum, along with the youngest of her children and her sister Betje. In 1913, her sister Kaatje joined them there. Barend too moved to Bussum, where together with his mother he once again started a slaughtering business. This time business didn't go so well: in 1913 they declared bankruptcy. Shortly thereafter, however, the debts could be paid off, so in 1914 the bankruptcy was annulled. In 1916, Barend moved to Amsterdam as a merchant, where he married Heintje Raphaël, Jacob Raphaël's sister. In 1918, Jenny's sister Heintje would marry Jacob Raphaël. Barend and Heintje lived in Amsterdam for a while, and then in Bussum, and later in Hilversum. They never had any children and, in 1936, Barend died.

David Levie could not make it as a butcher in Bussum, so he became a traveling sales representative for a pottery business and moved back to Naarden in 1924. From 1927 through 1929, his youngest brother, Abraham, lived with him. Abraham became a sales representative for luxury articles, living in Naarden for a while, and then in Bussum or Amsterdam for a while. In 1933, he married Andrea van den Kieboom (who came from a Catholic family) in Antwerp,

106. Translation of the inscription on the headstone by Mr. H. Boertjens, MA, of Zwolle: Of Judah, he said this (Dt. 33:7): Here is where Jehoeda is buried, the son of David van Gelder, from the city of Naarden, and Jeanet [?], who went on to the eternal world at the end of the holy Sabbath on the 1st of Kislev, Rosh Chodesh, the first day of the month, the day of the new moon, and who was buried on the fourth day of that month 5667—may his soul be bound in the bundle of the living [1 Samuel 25:29]. In addition, the following was inscribed in Dutch: Levi David van Gelder, husband of Sara de Leeuw, born in Amersfoort on the 21st of Nissan 5602 [April 1, 1842], died in Naarden on the 1st of Kislev 5667 [November 17, 1906].

where he opened a bookstore and a small publishing house. He died there in 1956. According to family tradition, he was a “bon vivant.”

Initially daughter Heintje worked as a nurse, but after completing a course of studies at the music conservatory in Amsterdam, she became a singing teacher and married Jacob Raphaël. Elisabeth, the youngest child of Levie David and Sara van Gelder, was also artistically inclined: she studied painting and married the artist Paul (Pol) Dom in Naarden in 1911. He had been born into a Catholic family in Antwerp in 1885. Elisabeth and Pol moved to Ixelles, near Brussels, where their first daughter, Elise Louise, was born in 1913. The family moved to The Hague in 1927. In 1936 Elisabeth committed suicide, perhaps partially due to the political situation, which was becoming more and more threatening. Pol Dom continued living in The Hague, where he died in 1978. His daughter, Elise Louise, had emigrated to the United States a few years earlier.<sup>107</sup>

107. De gemeentelijke archiefdienst Amersfoort, Bevolkingsregister 1860–1915: gezinsblad [Municipal Archives, Amersfoort, Census Registry 1860–1915: family record]; Register Amsterdam, Bureau Burgerzaken: Bevolkingsadministratie na 1920 en Overlijdensregister [Municipal Archives, Amsterdam, Civic Affairs: Public Administration after 1920 and Registry of Deaths]; Stad Antwerpen, Burgerzaken: Bevolkingsregister [City of Antwerp, Civic Affairs: Census Registry]; Streekarchief Gooi en Vechtstreek: Bevolkingsregister en Huwelijksakten gemeente 's-Graveland [Gooi en Vechtstreek, District Archives: Census Registry and Marriage Certificates, the Municipality of 's-Graveland]; gemeente Den Haag, Dienst Burgerzaken: Bevolkingsregister 1913–1939 [Municipality of The Hague, Civic Affairs Office: Census Registry 1913–1939]; het Utrechts Archief: Overlijdensregister [Utrecht Archives: Registry of Deaths]; gemeentearchief Ouder-Amstel: Bevolkingsregister [Municipal Archives, Ouder-Amstel: Census Registry]. Stadsarchief gemeente Naarden: Bevolkingsregister 1861–1880, 1880–1900, 1900–1921; Overlijdensakten 1906–1947; Geboorteakten 1879–1917, ondermeer akte 1879–17 Jansje van Gelder; Bevolkingsregister Bussum 1900–1917: grote gezinskaart Van Gelder [Naarden City Archives: Census Registry 1861–1880, 1880–1900, 1900–1921; Death certificates 1906–1947; Birth certificates 1879–1917, including birth certificate 1879–17 Jansje van Gelder; Census Registry Bussum 1900–1917: extensive Van Gelder family record].

Jenny attended elementary school in Naarden, probably took religion classes with Marcus Haalman, and then went on to a secondary school for girls. Her youth was rather carefree, in light of the relative prosperity which the family enjoyed. During the summer, the family often went to the beach or to the woods. They also had a country home at their disposal.<sup>108</sup>

Jenny started taking piano lessons when she was still quite young. By 1900, she was taking private piano lessons from Anton Tierie in Amsterdam.<sup>109</sup> She studied general music theory with Daniël de Lange at the conservatory,<sup>110</sup> and took part in the recitals given by the conservatory students, even though she herself wasn't officially enrolled as a student. A concert program from 1900 explicitly states that she was a student of Mr. Tierie and Mr. De Lange.<sup>111</sup> Later, Jenny remembered that Pieter van der Meer de Walcheren had been in her class when she was studying with Daniël de Lange.<sup>112</sup> At the time, that had not meant a lot to her, but when she was writing about it later (in 1933), Van der Meer de Walcheren enjoyed a certain fame within Catholic circles as a convert and a writer.<sup>113</sup>

As she herself put it, Jenny led a rather independent life, just as her sisters Heintje and Elisabeth did. The three girls did not have

108. Akh F Löb 2, J. Löb-van Gelder, *Mijn Weg tot Kristus* [My Journey to Christ].

109. Anton Tierie (1870–1938), director, pedagogue, and organist, who also taught the basic required course at the conservatory. See S. Bottenheim, *Prisma Encyclopedie der muziek*, 3rd ed. (Utrecht/Antwerp, 1957), 159.

110. Daniël de Lange (1841–1918), composer and teacher at the Muziek-school van Toonkunst [Music School for Art Music] in Amsterdam. See E. Reeser, *Een eeuw Nederlandse muziek, 1815–1915*, rev. ed. (Amsterdam, 1986), 127–29.

111. Documentation, P. van Broekhoven-Löb, Concert program from the theater “Thalia” in Bergen op Zoom.

112. Ako file 429, letter from Jenny, December 4, 1933.

113. J. van Oudheusden, et al., eds., *Brabantse biografieën*. Nr. 3 (Amsterdam/Meppel, 1995), 88–91.

to work in the butcher shop. The fact that all three of them were allowed to develop culturally and artistically leads one to conclude that their family was oriented toward the wealthy middle class, and that they had the necessary means at that time. Family tradition has it that Jenny and Heintje occasionally traveled by coach to expensive clothing stores in Amsterdam.<sup>114</sup> That must have been in the period before 1904, before Jenny's father suffered enormous losses in the city fire. Jenny, however, never wrote anything at all about that fire or its consequences. Neither did she ever say anything specific about when and where she met Lutz Löb in Amsterdam.

After her father died in 1906, the butcher business went downhill and, when bankruptcy was declared, the family fell apart. Jenny's mother, Sara de Leeuw, became sick and was admitted to a mental institution in Utrecht. She died there on April 23, 1920, and was buried beside her husband in Amersfoort. She too was given a headstone with the usual Hebrew inscriptions.<sup>115</sup>

### **Weighing the Evidence**

Lutz Löb was descended from a family of German Jewish merchants who managed to climb the social ladder in the course of the nineteenth century. Beginning as country peddlers with an uncertain existence, most of the family became well-to-do merchants in the textile and clothing business, moving their families and their businesses to the centers of large cities. Lutz's parents emigrated from the Rhineland countryside to The Hague, where they profited from

114. According to Mrs. P. van Broekhoven-Löb, who was told this by her mother, Jenny.

115. Translation of the inscription on the headstone by Mr. H. Boertjens, MA, of Zwolle: Here lies a good woman, Sara, the daughter of Kohen Eliahoe de Leeuw and Esther, and Sara died on Friday, the 5th of Iyar and she was buried on the following Monday in the year 5680 – may her soul be bound in the bundle of the living. And in Dutch: Here rests Sara de Leeuw, wife of Levie David van Gelder, died on the 5th of Iyar [April 23] 5680 [1920].

the flourishing economy at the turn of the century, which in turn made their assimilation into the culture of the local society easier. Lutz grew up with the values of hard work and a frugal lifestyle. However, the family's integration into Dutch society was limited: the social network for Nathan and Lina's family was constituted by their relatives and their business contacts in the Netherlands, with an orientation toward German culture and other family members who were still living in Germany.

Schooling was regarded as the best way to advance, especially for the sons. At first, this schooling was oriented toward a profession in one of the family businesses, with Lutz being the first to pursue an academic course of studies. The traditional village Judaism of the Rhineland, which to a great extent had already been adapted to the predominantly Christian surroundings, gradually gave way to a secularized Judaism, in which some religious practices were maintained at pivotal moments in their private lives, but which for the most part had nothing more than a social function. In The Hague, the Loeb family had very few connections with the vital Jewish community there. Family ties were close, and Lutz spent most of his time with his oldest brother Ernst.

Jenny van Gelder was descended from families who had been living in the Netherlands for several generations. For quite a long time, most of the male members of the Van Gelder family and the De Leeuw family had been butchers, with members of both families living and working in towns and villages in the central part of the country. They too profited from the flourishing economy at the end of the nineteenth century, which enabled them to expand their businesses. Various family members held important positions within the small Jewish communities. Jenny's parents belonged to the elite of the Jewish community in Naarden, but there was little opportunity for a flourishing Jewish religious community life there. Certain aspects of the Jewish religion were maintained within the family circle (for example, the Hebrew inscriptions on her parents' headstones), but apparently Jenny did not experience them as such.

As long as business was good, the Van Gelder family could adapt to the lifestyle of the well-to-do middle class. The father's death in 1906 led to a decline in business, which ultimately ended in bankruptcy. It seems that the family was inclined to live beyond its means. Jenny and her sisters were given opportunities to develop their cultural talents, a sign of how much the Van Gelder family had adapted to the culture of the prosperous middle class, but also a fact which allows one to conclude that, within the Van Gelder family, there was an awareness that the daughters too had a right to take part in the process of social emancipation.

Lutz grew up in prosperity and was predestined to receive a position within the family business upon completing his education. For Jenny, the future was not predetermined: she had no interest in the butcher shop, and her parents gave her the opportunity to develop freely. Her memories of their prosperous years predominate.



Salomon Leib/Loeb (1822–1887).



Jettchen Meyer (1844–1929),  
Salomon Leib's second wife.

Salomon Loeb's headstone  
in Münstereifel.



Hannechen (Anna) Strauss  
(1822–1904), Lina Rubens's mother.



Ruben Rubens (1816–1892),  
Lina Rubens's father.



Nathan Loeb in 1893.



Lina Loeb-Rubens in 1893.



Nathan Loeb's brothers and sisters with their spouses, a photo collage from 1888.

Neustraße. **Nathan Loeb**, Ecke der Wilhelmstraße.  
Euskirchen.

Zur bevorstehenden Saison erlaube mir auf mein best assortirtes Lager  
fertiger Herren- und Knaben-Garderoben,  
sowie auf sämtliche Qualitäten von Tuchen und Buzkins  
erhöchst aufmerksam zu machen.

==== Anfertigung nach Maasß elegant und solide. ====

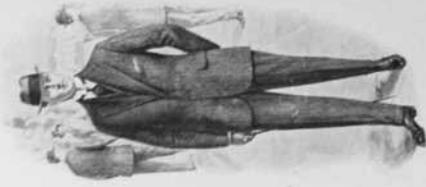
Ecke der Neu- und Wilhelmstraße. **Nathan Loeb**, Ecke der Neu- und Wilhelmstraße.  
Euskirchen.

**Communion-Anzüge**  
zu 5, 6, 7, 8 bis 10 Thaler,  
empfiehlt  
**Nathan Loeb**,  
Euskirchen.

Advertisements for the Loeb business in the *Euskirchener Zeitung*  
[the Euskirchen Gazette].



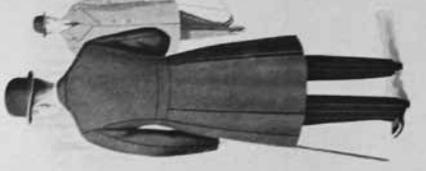
N. LOEB — NOORDENDE 109-111  
DEN HAAG



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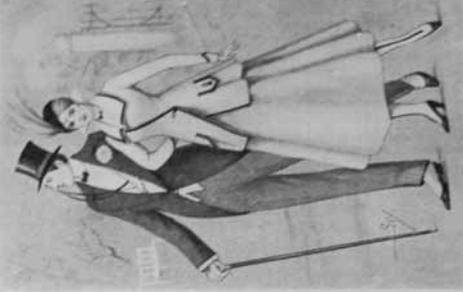


HEEREN COSTUMES  
HEEREN DEEMSAJSSONS  
HEEREN REGENJASSSEN

**PANTALONS — HOEDEN  
SCHOENWERK**

Prima kwaliteit. — Zeer grootte assortering.

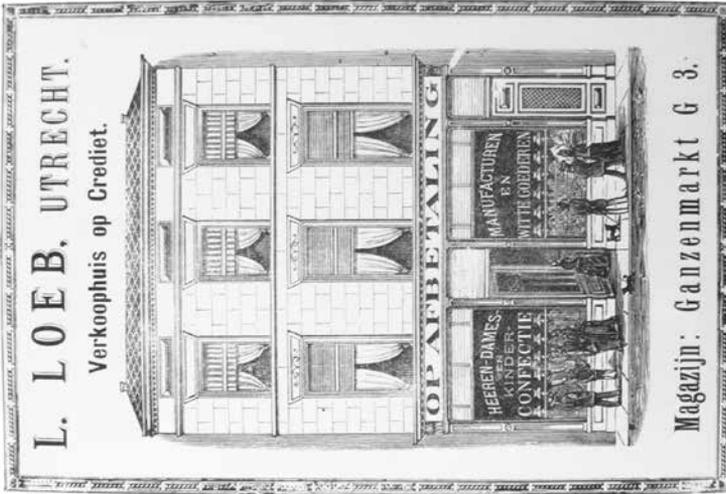
1916



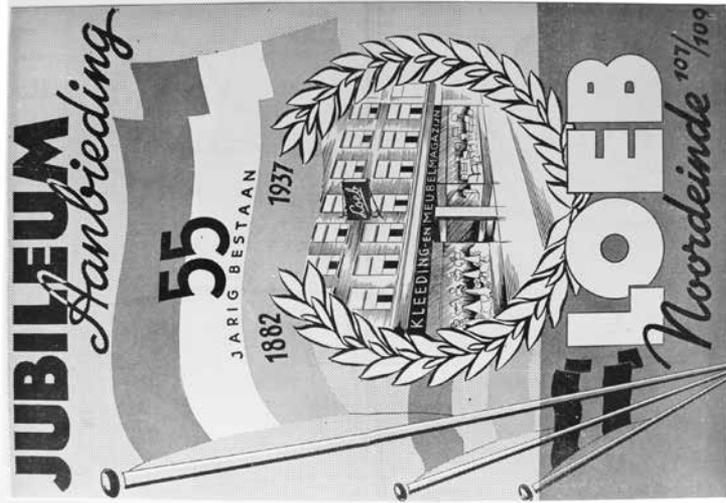
**Firma N. Loeb**  
Noordende 109-111 \* DEN HAAG.

*Dames-, Heeren- en  
Kinderkleding-Magazijnen.*

An advertising folder (1916) for the Loeb business in The Hague.



The establishment of the Utrecht branch of the Loeb business, around 1890.



Jubilee poster (1937) for the Loeb business in The Hague.



Lutz (three years old) and Ernst (six years old), The Hague, 1884.



Six of the Loeb children, The Hague, 1890. Standing, from left to right: Johanna, Ernst, Paul, Lutz. Sitting: Emma and Frits.

Five of the Loeb children, The Hague, 1898, from left to right: Frits, Johanna, Thea, Emma, and Alfred.



In March 1902, Nathan and Lina celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in The Hague. The children posed for the occasion, from left to right: Emma, Frits, Thea, Lutz, Ernst, Johanna, Alfred, and Paul.



Loeb Family Reunion in The Hague, 1905. Standing, left to right: Ernst, Emma, Fritz, Alex Paradies. Sitting, left to right: Lutz, Esther Wiener, Nathan, Lina, Johanna with her son Frits on her lap, Thea. Sitting in the foreground: Alfred and Paul.



A portrait photo of Jenny van Gelder, ca. 1900.

# CONCERT.

→ 12 Februari 1900, 8

TEN BATE VAN DE

Kingene Kernen der stad Naarden,

te geven in „t Hof van Holland“,

DOOR

M<sup>rs</sup>. J. VAN GELDEN, (Piano).

Liederen van de Heeren: DAN, DE LANGE en ANT. H. THIELE.

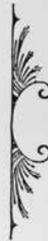
M<sup>rs</sup>. J. CULP, (Zang).

Den Heer Ed. TAK, (Viool),

„ „ G. J. DOLMAN, (Alt),

Aanvang 7.30 uur, (Greenwich),

Entrée f 1.—



De vleeschpiano is uit 't Magazijn van Dewaer,  
Robin 88 Amsterdam.

# Programma:

No. 1. TRIO, Es-dur . . . . . W. H. MOZART.  
(piano, viool en alt).

No. 2. a. SAPPHISCHE ODE . . . . JOH. BRAHMS.

b. FELDEINSAMKEIT . . . . \*

c. IN DEN FREMDE . . . . . W. TAUBERT.  
(sang).

No. 3. NOVELLETTE OP. 21 . . . . SCHUMAN.  
(piano).



No. 4. a. RÉVERIE, ADAGIO . . . . H. VIEUXTEMPS.  
b. 2e POLONAISE BRILLANTE H. WIENIAWSKI.  
(viool).

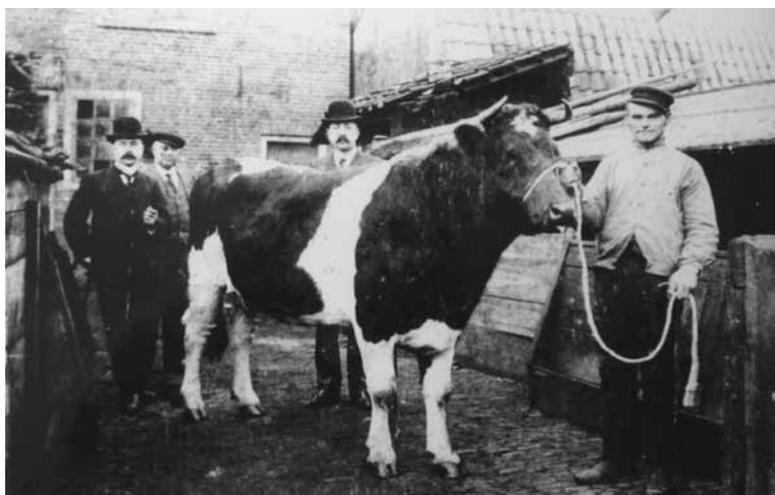
No. 5. a. KRUISWEGE . . . . . KOR KUILEN.  
b. IN 'T WOOD . . . . . GEORG RUKEN.  
c. WIEGELIEDJE . . . . . CATH. V. KENNES.  
(sang).



A program from a concert in which Jenny van Gelder performed as a pianist.



The house on Marktstraat, beside the City Hall in Naarden, where Jenny van Gelder grew up.



The cattle stalls behind the Van Gelder's butcher shop in Naarden were destroyed by fire in 1904. In this photo from around 1904: hired hand Steven Brand (1873–1952), with a cow. Behind the cow, Jenny Löb-van Gelder's father and brothers, from left to right: brother David (1874–1943), father Levie David (1842–1906), and brother Barend van Gelder (1877–1936).



The headstones of Jenny van Gelder's parents in Amersfoort.