

**On 29 April 1942 the head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration describes the Jewish Council's dismay at the introduction of the yellow star<sup>1</sup>**

Report by the Senior Commander of the Security Police for the Occupied Dutch Territories (IV B B.no. 1036/41), signed Dr Harster, The Hague, to the Commissioner General for Justice and Administration, Dr Wimmer (received on 1 January 1942), The Hague, dated 29 April 1942<sup>2</sup>

Re: introduction of the yellow star

Case file: –

The Jewish Council was informed at 4 p.m. today that within the next three days it must implement the use of the yellow star to visibly identify all Jews. The head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration<sup>3</sup> provided the following information about the details of the procedure:

As per orders, at 4 p.m. on 29 April 1942 the chairmen of the Jewish Council, A.) *Asscher* – B.) *Cohen* were summoned to the Central Office for Jewish Emigration. They were informed by SS-Hauptsturmführer Aus der Fünten that identification (yellow star) was to be implemented. They were made aware that this order would be published in today's evening press and that it would come into force three days after being announced. Upon receiving this information, both Asscher and Cohen were completely speechless. Apparently this measure had not been anticipated. Then they, that is Asscher and Cohen, declared that while it was not good news for the Jews, they personally were proud to wear the star, which would make them honorary citizens of the Netherlands. Cohen also asked why yellow in particular had been chosen as the colour of the star. After all, for the Jews, yellow is the colour of humiliation.<sup>4</sup> SS-Hauptsturmführer Aus der Fünten replied that the colour had been chosen for its conspicuousness and that the star is also the same colour in Germany. The Jewish Council was then issued with the stars (569,355 units).<sup>5</sup> The task of handing out the stars was assigned to the Jewish Council, which, however, objected that three days was too short. It was made aware that this deadline had to be adhered to at all costs. The enquiry was then made as to whether an announcement by the Jewish Council could appear in the daily press. This was refused. After Cohen had exclaimed that this was a dreadful measure, Asscher said, to quote him directly: 'It won't be long, one or two months, until the war is over and we are free!'

1 NIOD, 020/1507. Published in Joods Historisch Museum Amsterdam (ed.), *Documents of the Persecution of the Dutch Jewry* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum Polak & Van Gennep, 1969), pp. 54 ff. This document has been translated from German.

2 Handwritten notes in the original.

3 Ferdinand aus der Fünten.

4 The visible identification of *dhimmi*s (non-Muslims – Christians and Jews) was enacted in Muslim countries as early as the ninth century and there is documentary evidence from the twelfth century of yellow badges being used to identify Jews. In Christian Europe the visible identification of Jews spread during the Middle Ages; in German-speaking areas a yellow badge became the most common type.

5 Each of the 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands received several yellow stars. All Jews over the age of six had to wear one.

Overall it can be said that the Jewish Council attempted to protest strongly against the introduction of the star. Cohen, for example, said the following: ‘You will understand our feelings, Herr Hauptsturmführer; this is a terrible day in the history of the Jews in Holland!’