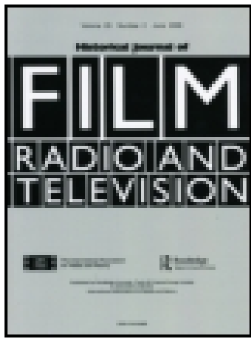

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THE WESTERBORK FILM REVISITED: PROVENANCE, THE RE-USE OF ARCHIVE MATERIAL AND HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCES

Fabian Schmidt

The Westerbork film has become an iconic piece of archive footage. It was granted world document heritage by UNESCO in 2017 and has been a subject in the periphery of the international academic debate on the relationship between archival footage and historical inquiry since Harun Farockis' Respite *(2007). Despite its status as one of the most important archive films of the Holocaust, there has been next to no critical research on the provenance of the material. In the course of my dissertation research, it has become clear that at least parts of the edition in circulation today– namely the subject of all written and filmic publications since the early 1990s – is not the original, but instead an altered, shortened form, most likely produced in a Dutch archive during the late 1980s with the intention to present the footage in ways attractive to potential buyers. This essay lays out the extent of these modifications to the original footage and explores their effects on subsequent essays and films. The implications of these findings for the ethics of appropriation and general approaches to archival footage in different contexts such as historiographical research and public commemoration of the genocide of the European Jews are explored in detail.*

Archive film has played an important role in the historicization of the genocide of the European Jews. From the mid 1950s on, more and more audio-visual media was included in this process. In 1955, Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* was the first documentary with international distribution, that introduced archive footage about the deportations and the National Socialistic system of labor and concentration camps to a wider audience. Compilation films such as *Den Blodiga Tiden* (1960) by

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Figure 1. Two iconic images: The girl in the boxcar (Westerbork film), A starved boy (Warsaw Ghetto film).

Erwin Leiser and *Le temps du ghetto* (1961) by Frédéric Rossif were soon accompanied by larger efforts on a national level. The Dutch tv series *De Bezetting* (1960-1968) for example or the German production *Das Dritte Reich* (1961) employed archive material connected to the persecution of European Jews, contributing to - and influencing - the development of Holocaust remembrances.[1] Only few archival films existed and the limited access to archives – many collections in the Soviet Union for example were not available until the end of the Cold War – in addition to small budgets did result in a repetitive use of the same material. Certain pieces of footage became iconic, like the girl in the boxcar from the Westerbork film and the begging child from the Warsaw Ghettofilm (Figure 1).

When eyewitnesses 'became a dominant element in historical documentaries' in the 1990s, filmmakers increasingly used this footage in combination with testimonies, and eventually started to scrutinise the footage itself.[2] In documentaries like *Gezicht van het Verleden* (1994) or *A film unfinished* (2010) historians investigated the provenance and recorded content of iconic archive-films, which were known as general representations of the genocide of the European Jews. Some of these investigations led to surprising and, at first sight, contradictory discoveries – 'the relationship between film as record and as representation' turned out to be precarious.[3] Despite the differences between the generalizing and the case-oriented approach, the reactions to these specific investigations often seem to render them as a 'coming to terms' with history, the peak of a teleological development leading from misunderstanding to clarity. But these verdicts disregard the autonomy of the 'culture of use' that emerged with the iconization of these archive films. At the same time, these discoveries were contextualised - and even biased - by historical narratives. To put it another way, this culture of use, or the manner in which the footage was used in the context of Holocaust memorialization, fits into a much broader social discourse: a general historical narrative about the genocide of the European Jews. The alleged 'misinterpretation' that happens in this context can by no means be reduced to misreadings. Similarly, new discoveries about the factual content of the footage are themselves mediated as historical narrativizations, which are again influenced by contemporary narratives and hence partially contingent references to those historical events. These, too, should be approached with a good degree of scepticism. Again, to be absolutely clear, the above differentiation intends to emphasize the necessity to fully acknowledge both approaches in their own right.

With this in mind, scrutinizing iconic film footage appears to be a complicated matter, as the dialogue between narrative and footage, between representation and record is bidirectional. This essay predominantly examines an iconic piece of Holocaust film footage: the deportation sequence in the Westerbork footage. It is a paradoxical piece of evidence, insofar as it represents the deportation of Jews in boxcars to Auschwitz and, at the same time, confounds our expectations about what such a deportation looked like. As is often acknowledged, the Jewish deportees appear to be in a surprisingly good mood, laughing or waving cheerfully at the camera.[4] A common interpretation is that the Jews visible in the footage do not know what awaits them in Poland, and hence are hopeful. Another assertion that has prevailed in the discourse around the Westerbork footage and that is closely related to the first assumption is the verdict that the material has been handed down in a raw, unedited state.[5]

During a detailed investigation of the footage's provenance, I found out that the common narrative attributed to this footage is most likely a misinterpretation fuelled by a shortened and recut version of the footage, that circulated since the late 1980s and was mistaken for the original. This essay reconstructs how the Westerbork film was altered and appropriated. It elaborates on two aspects: the first part analyses why the reconstruction of the deportation recorded in the Westerbork material failed due to the interaction of historical discourse and film document, while the second discusses ways of a more appropriate interplay of footage, historical records and commemoration in the case of the Westerbork footage.

The footage

Camp Westerbork was a transit camp in Holland.[6] The camp oversaw the detention of Dutch Jews, of whom – from 1942 onwards – more than 100,000 were subsequently deported to the death-camps in Poland, the Theresienstadt ghetto or Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. In the spring of 1944, scenes of Westerbork camp life were shot on 16 mm film, commissioned by camp commander SS-Obersturmführer Konrad Gemmeker. In April 1945, when Canadian forces reached the Westerbork camp, commander Gemmeker most likely took the film material with him and fled to Groningen. For a while, the reels were considered lost, but then they were found again in 1947 by Hans Ottenstein, a former camp inmate and, at the time, researcher at RIOD, the Dutch 'Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie'.[7] In 1955, Alain Resnais used scenes from the deportation sequence for his well-known documentary short *Night and Fog*, including the iconic shot with the young Sintessa, who, by this time, was believed to be a Jewish girl.[8] *Night and Fog* was commissioned by the *Comité d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale* (Committee on the history of the Second World War) and the *Réseau du souvenir* (Network of memory) juxtaposing contemporary footage from Auschwitz with archive footage about the deportations and the system of concentration camps. As a matter of fact the voice over by Jean Cayrol does not explicitly refer to the persecution and extermination of Jews, but rather focusses on political prisoners and slave labor. Still, the usage of footage, such as the

deportation sequence from Westerbork (deportees wearing Jewish stars visibly) and the developing historicization of the Holocaust predominantly as genocide against Jews did contribute to the appropriation of *Night and Fog* as the first Holocaust documentary. The film's nomination for the competition at the international film festival in Cannes 1956 was halted after an intervention of the German government, which contributed to the wide attention it received from the start. Until today *Night and Fog* is considered one of the most important films about the genocide of the European Jews and it is shown in schools in Europe regularly.[9]

Due to the footage's rarity, the striking figure of the girl, and the success of *Night and Fog*, the deportation sequence from the Westerbork footage later became one of the most frequently used images in the context of Holocaust remembrances.[10] The rest of the filmed material remained widely neglected until its 'rediscovery' in 1994 during the scrutiny surrounding the identification of the girl in the boxcar, Settela Steinbach.[11] Cherry Duyns and Aad Wagenaar were able to prove that the girl in the boxcar door was not Jewish, but of Sinti background.[12] This discovery was accompanied and supported by the research of Kurt Broersma and Gerard Rossing and brought new public attention to the Westerbork film in the Netherlands. Since 2007, the Westerbork footage has become internationally known thanks to Harun Farocki's film *Respite*, which explores the footage, making larger stretches of it publicly available for the very first time. Finally, in 2017, the Westerbork material was granted World Document Heritage by UNESCO after the Dutch archive Beeld en Geluid had applied for it.[13]

Officially, the surviving footage – roughly 90 minutes – is held by Holland's Beeld & Geluid (Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision).[14] It consists of four reels of the main material, and two short reels called 'residual-material' (restmateriaal). In order, the preserved sequences contain the following footage: scenes from the platform (the arrival of two trains, the registry of the new inmates, one outgoing train), various work barracks and the scrap heap, the laundry, the hospital (laboratories, a dentist's), a Christian Sunday service, workers at the canal, rides on the camp's own narrow-gauge railway, the farm, logging, sports activities, and eventually the camp's own cabaret. The footage does not show any aspects of violence or hardship: not the guarded fence around the camp (with two exceptions, where watchtowers can be seen far in the background), nor the crowded accommodation barracks, restrooms or other hygiene facilities. There is no life on the streets of the camp, no administrative offices or buildings, nothing about any daily routine, such as cooking or eating, and not one piece of footage showing the majority of the detained who were not employed, who stayed in less comfortable barracks, often only for a few weeks. The people shown are the few selected for the workshops or the cabaret stage. At the time of the filming, there were (due to fluctuation during the weeks of shooting the material) between an actual 4000 to 7000 persons interned in Westerbork, whereas the footage shows even less than a fraction of them. The atmosphere in the film seems relaxed and friendly and people often smile at one another, or look directly into the camera.[15]

The degree of familiarity that the inmates demonstrate with the camera is one of the most striking aspects of the material, which comes across partially reminding

the spectator of a home movie.[16] Except for the scenes at the platform, no uniformed or armed personnel is filmed, despite the fact that SS men, armed Dutch gendarmes, and as many as 150 men from the Ordnungsdienst were present, as well as, during the transports, another group of armed policemen working as guards on the trains.[17] In short, the film does not show the camp as it was in its entirety, but rather a very carefully selected faction of facilities and people, all in higher ranking positions within the camps hierarchy, filmed in the presence of the SS. Except for the deportation sequence, it does not show anything but cover images, and this essay will argue that even the very deportation was carefully selected.

Approaches to the footage

Any assessment of the Westerbork material is complicated by the fact that many of the contemporary witness reports were based on observations from – and often written in – 1943, months before the footage was filmed. Since the winter of 1943-1944 brought severe changes to the camp's organisation and population, these earlier reports do not refer to what we see in the film.[18] Understandably, the footage is nonetheless often juxtaposed with these reports. The contradictions between attributed representation and actual record caused uneasiness in early spectators, and they contributed to a discourse that has changed its perspective on the material over the decades. In the years after the war, for example, the movie was mainly seen as a product of the SS, and consequently one wondered why the transport to Auschwitz had been recorded.

Dutch historian Loe de Jong only mentions the film twice, in passing, in his 18,000 page encyclopaedia about World War Two in Holland.[19] He was among those who found the film, and he included a significant amount of footage in his TV series about the occupation *De Bezetting* (1960-1968), but with a voiceover asserting that, since it had been made by the SS, the material rendered a distorted image of the camp. This ambivalent approach reflects a distinct scepticism towards official film documents made during National Socialism which was typical for the first two decades after the war. The involvement of Dutch Jews in the production of the *Theresienstadtfilm* for example was discussed critically in the Netherlands, and it was widely considered collaboration.[20] But de Jong's stance also anticipates a scepticism towards the perpetrators' perspective that was less vital during the new public interest in National Socialism from the mid 1990s on and has only been revived in the more recent debates in Holocaust and genocide studies for example around Yael Hersonskis *A film unfinished* (2011). While there is a contemporary stance of scepticism towards the use of archive footage reaching back to Claude Lanzmanns *Shoah* (1985) today's Holocaust studies also accept a more pragmatic approach, which has resemblances to de Jongs usage, who shows the footage and acknowledges the perpetrators' perspective.[21]

In 1965, Jacob Presser expressed his discomfort with the self-accusatory aspects of the footage produced by the camp commander:

> 'It is incomprehensible to the writer that [the camp commander F.S.] Gemmeker does not suspect what a terrible charge it contains against himself and the system he served. Whoever saw the little girl, the helpless Jewish child, in fear of death before the doors shut, glancing through a gap of a boxcar door that's taking her away to her unknown destination, will ask the same question'.[22]

These difficulties in grasping the Westerbork film most likely did indeed encourage the change of paradigm that took place in the 1990s, which will be elaborated on later. By attributing the making of the film to camp inmate Rudolf Breslauer, these contradictions became manageable, rendered partially as a subversive subtext added to the material by the idea of inmates collaborating in filming the footage.

So far, there exists only one larger effort to examine the footage and its history: Koert Broersma and Gerard Rossing's booklet, *Westerbork gefilmd* (1997), published in Dutch only and out of print since at least a decade. In a recent essay, Axel Doßmann made their findings accessible for German readers, but without significant critical perspective on their methodology.[23] Axel Doßman added his own research, as did Sylvie Lindeperg in her essays, but, at their core, most publications about the Westerbork footage, which were largely triggered by Harun Farockis *Respite* in 2007, refer – directly or indirectly – to Broersma and Rossing.[24] In this essay we move beyond this critical work by examining the footage itself, taking as starting point the concerns of Presser and de Jong.

A surprising discovery

During the process of researching usage of the Westerbork material post-1945, I repeatedly encountered troubling findings.[25] Attempts to reference the citations of Westerbork footage in documentaries revealed that many directors had used so-called outtakes of the material, although there was no evidence of the existence of an outtake reel.[26] Another oddity was evident in TV footage of the screening of the Westerbork film during the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem: the edition of the Westerbork footage used there did not correspond with the version considered 'the original' which was available publicly.

The explanation for these contradictions was eventually discovered in a five-minute piece of 16 mm film containing scenes from the deportation sequence, which I found in the film archive of Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, Israel. Yad Vashem had received this footage from the Dutch RIOD ('Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie') in 1973. It was an alternative montage of the so-called 'third train' from the Westerbork footage.[27] A comparison with the TV recordings confirmed that this was the montage used in the Eichmann trial in 1961. A frame by frame account of both editions - the so-called original, and the five-minute piece from Yad Vashem - yielded a big surprise: the latter, identical to the material used in the Eichmann trial, turned out to be an older, more complete edition of the Westerbork footage.[28] The footage

everyone was referring to since the discovery of Settela in 1994 finally turned out *not* to be the original cut.[29]

On the basis of the additional frames visible in the Yad Vashem version, as well as the unambiguous characteristics of the material (such as scratches and dirt on the film), it was now possible to divide the usages of the Westerbork footage in documentaries into two groups. The deceptively titled 'original material' was used for the first time by a Dutch production as late as 1988 and it only occurs in productions from that point onwards – roughly 50 have been identified.[30] All uses discovered prior to 1988 so far, on the other hand, were made with the older, more complete version from Yad Vashem. The so-called original version – the basis for all publications and documentaries since 1988 – only occurred in the late 1980s, most likely edited by RVD staff in Holland in 1986. Since Beeld en Geluid refers to this version as RVD-film in the UNESCO application, this essay will also use this name, as opposed to the earlier 'RIOD footage' provided by Yad Vashem.[31]

Comparison of materials

To be clear: it was only possible to compare the five minutes of footage of the so-called third train, since the rest of the original material is yet to be discovered. At 18 (out of 19) edits, the RVD-edit is shortened by up to 18 frames per edit. In about half the cases only the bright start frames, still visible in the older RIOD footage from the Yad Vashem archive, have been cut away to make the film look clean. But in eleven instances, the re-editing of the material pursued more than merely cosmetic intentions. The material had been rearranged, and some footage had been omitted.

The so-called outtakes – three shots with commander Gemmeker, and one shot showing the distribution of small barrels (for use as toilets) to a boxcar – had been cut out in the RVD-film. This is particularly striking, as, until 1988, these outtakes belonged to the sequences regularly used in documentaries: About half of the films (identified so far) using Westerbork material either made use of the humiliating shot showing the little barrels, or one of the shots of Gemmeker arrogantly observing the boarding of the deportees. Since the RVD-film began circulating in the late 1980s, these shots were no longer made available for public use.

The original material of the third train preserved in the RIOD footage from Yad Vashem consists of four bundles or rolls, each with a consistent look, and each roll with shots in chronological order. The bright starting frames at the beginning of each shot, and the absence of editing/cutting marks, is strong evidence that each bundle or roll belongs to a single canister of film. The first roll (1m19s) consists of a total of five shots with SS, police officers, and the departing train. The second roll (1m21s, 15 shots) shows Jews and SS on the platform, and contains the iconic sequence with Settela, as well as the three so-called outtakes with Gemmeker. The third roll (1m20s, 15 shots) begins with the view of the cart with catering for the guards and deportees. It incorporates a considerable leap in time - the outtake with the barrels is followed by shots with uniformed SS, taken a few

Figure 2. Shadows cast by the sun indicate the time of filming - early morning.

hours later, and it also shows preparations for the train's departure. Finally, after the sequence with the officers and their lists, a fourth roll (1m30s, 13 shots) starts with scenes from the platform. It contains the well-known image of the stretcher on which Frouwke Kroon's suitcase is said to be visible.[32] These pictures were taken even earlier in the day.

If we align the footage based on the empirical traces of the shadows cast by the setting sun, a natural continuity of the four rolls makes sense in the order of 4, 2, 3, 1 (Figures 2 and 3).

This does not explain the different weather situations, but it was perhaps a day with swift meteorological changes. These rolls – which this essay refers to as Roll 1 to Roll 4 – can also be related to each other by other aspects. The highest ranking police officer in Roll 3 appears to be identical to the one in Roll 1. Since the trains were often guarded by the same personnel, however, this could also be the case if the rolls had been shot on different days. Second, one larger gap between the boxcars is visible in both, Roll 3 and Roll 4. This gap opens a pathway to the camp's main street towards the south, so longer trains were always separated here. But it is obvious that the boxcars at this gap are identical in both Rolls, which seems an unlikely coincidence. Finally, we find one person from Roll 4 – an older man with beard and scarf – who also appears in Roll 2. There is evidence, therefore, that justifies the assumption that the footage in all four rolls was shot on the same day. In the edited RVD-film the continuity and integrity has been ignored in favour of a more logical succession of events, which will be explained later.[33] A rough sketch of how the material was newly distributed is illustrated in the diagram in figure 4.[34]

Figure 3. Shadows cast at almost noon (the tracks run straight from East to West).

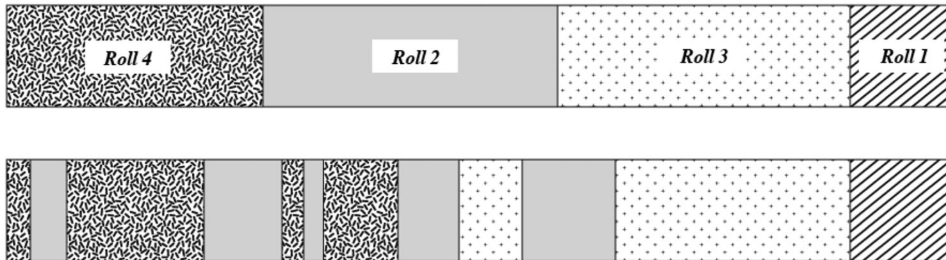

Figure 4. Shifting of footage of the so-called 'third train' Above: the newly found RIOD footage in chronological order (4,2,3,1) Below: the distribution of the original material in the 1986 RVD-film

Before we embark on a more specific analysis of the deportation sequence, a few words about the condition of the entire film. Though it would take the full 90 minutes (or more) original footage for an exact reconstruction of all the changes, the mere fact of its editing in the RVD-film can be detected relatively easily even without the original footage. This is possible by observing two features: the improperly applied gluing edits, and the shooting-related features of the material, such as fluffballs and fibres stuck in the aperture of the camera, which allow to identify material shot consecutively but edited otherwise into the film.[35]

A rough evaluation of the RVD-film reaches the following conclusion: the entire first reel (the first 20 minutes of the Westerbork film) seems to have been edited in a similar way like the deportation sequence. In the rest of the reels, on the other hand, there are only a handful of clear cases of montage. Still, the overall number of edits (289 edits, or 46% of 622 shots altogether) shows that, at the

very least, quite a lot of shortening, if not selection and omission has taken place, as in the case of the so-called outtakes around the third train.[36]

There was, therefore, quite a significant amount of editing done to the RVD-film. In its current state, the RVD-film represents a late post-war attempt to create a film rather than to present mere footage. On top of the filmic reality constructed in the interaction of the shooting, there is another layer of editing, which perhaps covers intentional 'montage' done by the original cinematographer in choosing a specific succession of shots.

The initial order of shots in the deportation sequence preserved in the raw RIOD footage is now open to interpretation. The iconic shot of the girl Settela in boxcar 16, for example, follows the shot of the elderly waving goodbye to children in one of the passenger cars. Both shots are the only ones with children and, due to their contrasting meaning, it is likely that the person shooting them, one after the other, did so on purpose. In order to do that, the cinematographer had to walk from one end of the train to its very other, and since this is the only moment showing someone belonging to the group of Sinti awaiting deportation on this day, this was most likely not part of the cinematographer's original assignment. These first finds lead to more general questions of narratives or meaning within the original footage.

An altered narration?

The RVD-film that was edited in 1986 shows an 'orderly' deportation process, while the older RIOD footage, at first glance, depicts a rather chaotic situation. While the editing standards of the RVD-film are technically poor, it is highly professional in its artistry and far more consistent, in terms of spatial orientation of the viewer, than the raw footage (Figure 5).

The raw RIOD footage is more repetitive and seems to make 'less sense'. The RVD-film spreads shots from the same POV over the entire montage and mixes the different rolls. For example when a person in the raw footage points somewhere, the RVD-film cuts to a special attraction, as if it were following the gesture. There is one instance in the montage of the third train (and other, similar cases later in reel one), where a shot has been split, and both its parts are being used at different points during the montage in order to create the impression of a process ongoing in the background. This kind of logic has been applied to contingent happenings to great effect.[37] The combining of shots, and the clever distribution of similar shots all through the montage alter the viewer's impression of the actual event.

It is likely that the editor in the 1980s put the shots into a new order, so that a logical succession of events emerges – logical in terms of the anticipated event, namely one of the regular deportations: Jews arrive at the platform, enter the boxcars, officers dispatch lists, the train leaves. This reordering produces an agreeable though contrafactual flow, and comes with another, most likely unintended, effect. While in the RVD-film fewer SS personnel can be seen altogether – three shots with commander Gemmeker were cut out – the SS also appear here much later during the deportation. The spectator can easily get the impression that the SS were not present for the rounding up of Jews, but instead stayed in the background to observe. Given the fact that Westerbork had one of the most

Figure 5. Typical defective edit in the RVD-film.

independent Jewish self-administrations, the RVD-film wrongly suggests evidence that even the deportations were self-organised.[38] With the outtakes in the right places, however, it becomes clear that Commander Gemmeker was present during the whole shooting process.

But the crucial discovery concerns the fact that, by smoothing out the editing, the RVD-film obscures the basic event the footage actually recorded. The transport of May 19th 1944 was not a standard deportation. Unacknowledged in the literature about the Westerbork film to date is the fact that about one third of the deportees on that day belonged to the so-called 'Diamond Jews', a group of gem cutters and merchants selected by Himmler to start a diamond industry in Bergen-Belsen.[39] The preparations for this transport go back to 1943, and they had been overseen by Eichmann in person: they were one of the main subjects of a meeting between Eichmann, Gemmeker and two other officials in Den Haag in November, 1943.[40] It is possible that Gemmeker actually filmed this particular transport in order to document the successful execution of Himmler's order. It is, however, also possible that Gemmeker specifically wanted to film a transport and therefore deliberately chose the one in question, as he hoped he would be recording seemingly "innocuous" proceedings which even in the times to come would not challenge his integrity nor pose a threat regarding his involvement within the system, but instead would perhaps even protect him, irrespective of any further course of events. And irrespective of any future audiences. Whatever the reasons were - the deportees in the Westerbork footage most likely are part of a group of gem cutters on their way to Bergen Belsen and not deportees selected for the death camps in Poland.

Figure 6. Outtake 1: Closed boxcars with deportees recognisable inside.

The RVD-film edited in 1986 shows a deportation that starts with arriving deportees, continues with boarding, the closing of doors, before finally showing the departure. But the camera in fact recorded a more complicated case structure. The raw RIOD footage starts with deportees walking along the numbered boxcars near the front of the train and boarding it. While recording the attraction of a large wheel stretcher, the camera moves to the left and films a first, slightly inconsistent detail: the boxcars in the rear part of the train have already closed doors. A 180-degree panning shot shows clearly that in the front people are still populating the platform, while in the rear the platform is deserted.[41] Then a second group arrives at the platform and turns to the right, towards the front of the train. The camera takes a couple of shots from the front of the train and then suddenly films the Sintessa Settela in the gap of the door of one of the last box-cars (number 16) in the rear part of the train. Now, the three perhaps most important shots come in succession. The camera records Gemmeker and another officer standing in front of boxcar 13, part of the rear half of the train. The doors are locked, but the deportees are already inside. A man (perhaps a member of the Jewish administration) stands on a ladder and talks to them through the window of the boxcar (Figure 6).

The next shot shows that the doors of the boxcars 11 (recognisable by the striped plank at the bottom) and 12 are also already locked (see figure 8).

The third shot again shows Gemmeker, but this time with the front of the train in the background. Now we see that the deportees still populate the platform at the front of the train. Clearly the boxcars in the rear are already locked (figure 10).

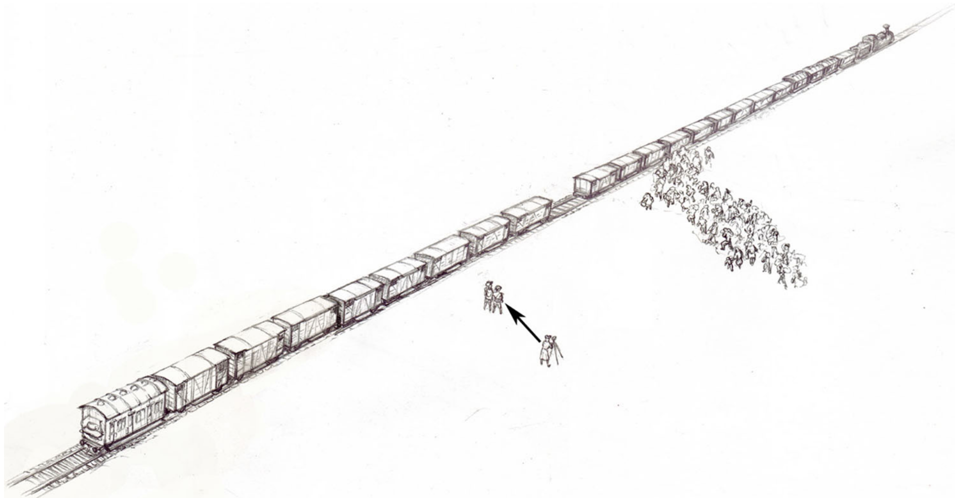

Figure 7. This illustration shows the position of the camera and the two SS-officers during the shot with boxcar 13 in figure 6:[42]

Figure 8. Outtake 2: The deserted platform at the rear of the train.

The front boxcars (Number 10 and lower), on the other hand, are being boarded, as the viewer can see in the second half of the same shot (see figure 12).

The RVD-film made in the 1980s omits precisely these three shots of Gemmeker, described above, which display the actual situation. The shots were taken out by an archivist in the 1980s probably without any particular motive, but simply because they were not logical in the assumed situation: an exemplary

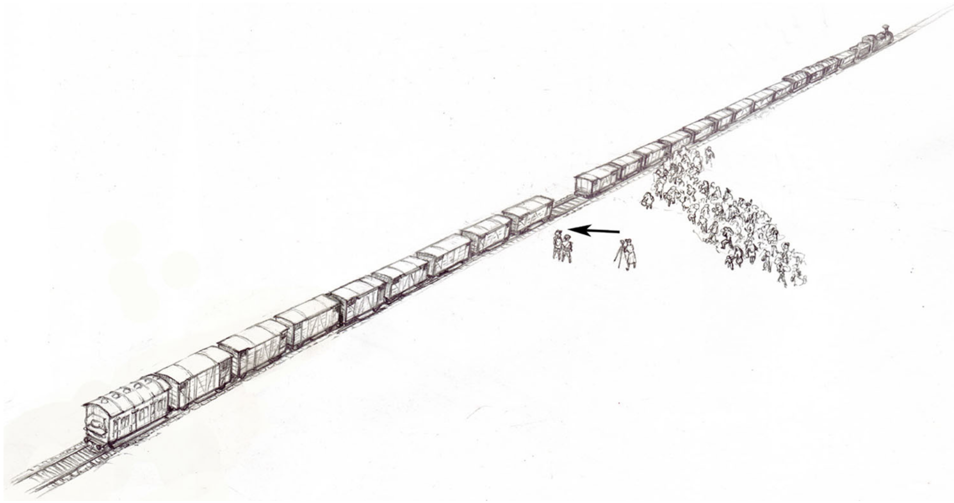

Figure 9. The position of the camera in figure 8.

Figure 10. Outtake 3: Camp commander Gemmeker and aid watch embarking process of deportees.

succession of arrival, embarkation, closing of doors and departure. Instead these images were counter to the desired narrative: They clearly show fully occupied wagons with closed doors, but at the very moment, the deportees are actually only starting to enter the platform. Even though the closed boxcars at the back of the train are also briefly visible in two of the shots that remained in the RVD-film, only the three outtakes with Gemmeker document the situation accurately. The stark contrast between the deserted end of the platform and its

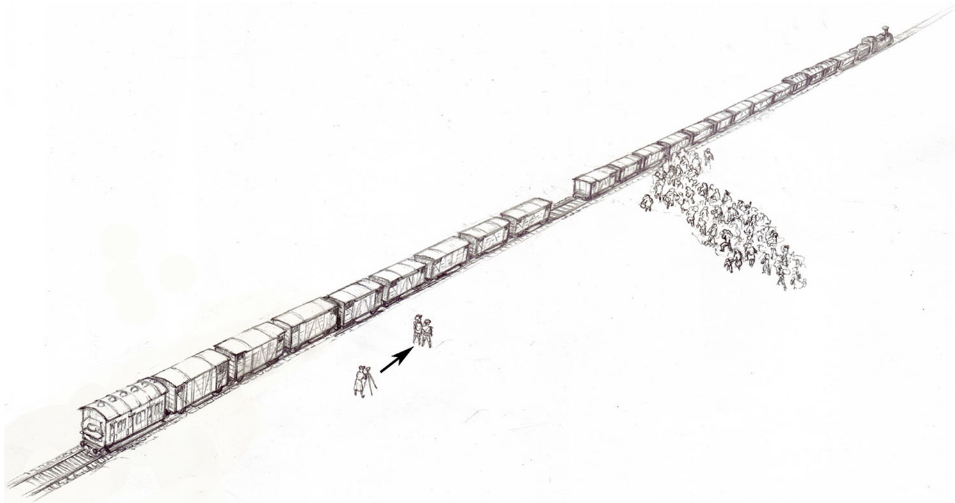

Figure 11. The illustration shows the angle of the camera in figure 10.

Figure 12. Outtake 3: Deportees embarking train at the front.

populated front is weakened by the montage of the RVD-film. This background suggests that the outtake-shots with Gemmeker could have been an attempt by the person filming to allude to the actual circumstances, i.e. the concealment of the deportation of the Jews in the boxcars to Auschwitz.

In light of the historical context regarding the 'Diamond Jews', the footage makes more sense. In contrast to the common claim in the associated literature that these figures are Jews being deported to Auschwitz, it appears that the Sinti and Jews heading for Auschwitz had in fact already boarded their train cars.

Gemmeker, we can assume, did not want to film them, as they most likely appeared considerably less amenable or enthusiastic. He wanted to film the 'Diamond Jews', and that is why the camera only starts recording when they arrive.

The Westerbork film in the context of holocaust memory

The rediscovery of the Westerbork material began in Holland in the 1990s with research undertaken by journalist Aad Wagenaar and film director Cherry Duyns. The public response to their controversial film, *Gezicht van het Verleden* (1994) and to Wagenaars journalistic efforts, led to the influential publication of Broersma's and Rossings' 'Westerbork gefilmd' in 1997. Farocki's short film, *Respite* (2007), simply made this information accessible across national borders, provoking a number of essays and increasing use of the footage in documentaries.[43] All these efforts have in common their reference to the 1986 RVD-film. The renewed interest in the movie also led to a broader reception of the Westerbork film as a whole. Most documentaries since 1994 make use of shots from the entire film, and not only of the train sequences. Starting with Wagenaar's publication about the Sintessa Settela and the 1994 documentary *Gezicht van het Verleden*, a discourse developed that presented Rudolf Breslauer as the sole cameraman and author of the film, and that oddly offers the material as raw and largely unedited. The lack of documented evidence around the production surely encouraged speculation. But these quasi-historiographical reconstructions were also affected by external factors. The emergence of the RVD-film coincides with the research of Wagenaar. Both happen around the 50th anniversary of World War II, when the genocide of the European Jews was at the centre of public attention. Two developments can be traced and reconstructed in the usage of the Westerbork footage: first, a new interest in – and way of – handling the material itself, and second, a move away from a primarily victimizing reading of the history of camp Westerbork towards a more heroic one.[44]

A closer look at the history of the use of the Westerbork material provides evidence for a general change in approach since the 1990s. This shift can be illustrated with examples of use of the Westerbork footage in documentaries since 1945. In the beginning, except for the trials in Holland, the connection between what was recorded in the footage and the contexts it was illustrating, is rather loose. After a brief phase of use as evidence in courts in the late 1940s, the appearance of the footage in *Night and Fog* in 1955 marks the starting point of its regular use in documentaries and film-essays.[45] This first utilization helped to generate a narrative, that later became one of the most enduring and sustainable ones, a true 'cover image': the peaceful atmosphere in which the Westerbork deportees are embarking cargo wagons illustrates a representation of the murder of Jews, which falsely envisions the proceedings outside the deathcamps as civilized and innocent.

Most of these early documentaries do not even name Westerbork as source, and use the footage in a generalising and illustrative fashion.[46] This can be

demonstrated along two examples, Schier-Gribowskis *Auf den Spuren des Henkers (*1961) and Joachim Hellwigs *Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank* (1958).

Peter Schier-Gribowski and his *Auf den Spuren des Henkers (*1961) acknowledges the Westerbork film as a document by referring to 'footage from Westerbork', but still alters the material. He simply cuts out all the misleading friendly moments and close-ups in the train sequence, and only shows trains and deportees from afar, shaping the footage until it fits the general narrative. But even though he dismisses its character as a source, he handles the material with great discretion. The material is adjusted to the purpose it is serving, as evidence of the deportations to 'the East', emphasized through a subsequent shot containing the Wiener footage of the killings in Liepaja. Obviously his adjustments are ruled by a discourse about the representation of the genocide of the European Jews and not by virtue of the content of the material.[47]

This critical pragmatism can also be found in another initially troubling example. In *Ein Tagebuch für Anne Frank* (1958), shots from the 'second train' in the Westerbork footage are used to illustrate the arrival of Jews in Auschwitz. The voiceover and the montage as such clearly refer to the deportation of Anne Frank to a concentration camp. Still, accusing the documentary of deceiving the spectator into believing that the footage shown is from Auschwitz, means to miss its aesthetic modus operandi. The entire documentary is a tapestry of collages of footage, graphics and sound effects. It is explicitly indifferent about the sources it is using, as it does not apply any meaning to them beyond illustrating the commentary. Again, the footage illustrates the narrative of the documentary and not the other way round. Exactly this misappropriation became in a sense iconic, and re-occurs in films like *Mein Kampf* (1960), *The 81st Blow* (1974), *Der Gelbe Stern* (1981), *Pillar of Fire* (1981) and *Genocide* (1982).[48] In all these films, other shots from the Westerbork material have been used, and therefore these misuses were probably done knowingly. Using the second train from the Westerbork material as a specific illustration of Auschwitz can be seen as an example of the general indifference towards the provenance of footage that justified an appropriation we find ongoing into the 1980s. But it could also be interpreted positively as the outcome of a 'culture of use', a discourse, legitimizing the employment of the second train as an evidencing as much as emotionalising and eventually iconising illustration for Auschwitz.

The acceptance of this kind of instrumentalising use changes with the new interest in the material in the 1990s. Now, the Westerbork footage is often used in longer, unedited stretches. Cases of exploitative montage, on the other hand, become rare. The identification of Settela, for example, and the well-known discovery of the writing on Frouwke Kroons' suitcase - which made it possible to reveal the exact date of the deportation - point to a more case-oriented handling of the material. Film scholars and journalists widely acknowledged the discovery of Settela as a timely advancement of historical research and the eventual discovery of the footage as a document.[49] But similar to the cases described above and contrary to their conclusions, the label of the 'Jewish girl' was not a case of mistaken identity, but the result of a generalised use of the footage as a representation of the persecution of Dutch Jewry. It was the outcome of a, compared to today, less case-oriented

approach to the footage that was common in the first decades after the war. On the one hand, the material was used to represent a generalizing historical narrative; on the other hand, historians in the 1990s scrutinised it as a source for the specific historical event (camp Westerbork in Spring, 1944) which it recorded.

Naturally, this more mindful approach largely rendered the prior culture of use as mere misappropriation. But it ignored the refined modes of negotiation that had led to moments of consensus within the culture of use as part of the greater discourse of the genocide of the European Jews. The new mindfulness that accompanies the deployment of footage since the 1990s prevents misappropriations, but goes along with an increased and unjustified attribution of credibility to the footage. The Westerbork footage is suddenly considered a source of historical truth based solely on its provenance from an archive. Instead of a discourse, a new form of credibility of the footage becomes the benchmark of its use.

The second development that affected the tradition of the Westerbork footage is the slow shift in Europe, over the last thirty years, from a victimizing interpretation of the genocide of the European Jews towards an equally heroic one. In Israel, the heroic perspective has always been part of the national identity, whereas – especially in Germany – references to the ghetto fighters in Warsaw, to the several successful acts of resistance in the death camps, and to the resistance of Jewish partisans, are rare and barely addressed in the official remembrances. Interestingly, there is a strong correlation between the victimization of European and US-American Holocaust remembrance and its historicization using archival footage. Until the 1960s, commemorative practices were largely limited by national contexts. These comprised tendencies towards heroic readings (most noticeable in Poland) and a bias towards victimization (for example in Holland). They tended, with the increasing use of archival footage in the late 1950s, more and more toward narratives of futility and resignation.[50] The simple fact that the archival footage either showed devastated camp inmates in the freed camps, or footage made by propaganda companies, propelled a bias towards victimization. The Westerbork footage shows neither, and yet we can find traces of this development from victimisation to heroic reading also in the way the Westerbork footage was utilised. In the first decades after the war, shots from the train sequence were used to illustrate sections of films that referred to general aspects of the genocide of the European Jews or the Nazi system of slave labour. In most cases, it was implicitly assumed that the footage had been made by the perpetrators. In documentaries referring to the material, such as *De Bezetting* (1960-68) and *The Legacy of Anne Frank* (1967), the SS is named as author. While the atrocity or liberation films and the Nazi propaganda footage either showed gruesome details, or were obviously made by Nazi authorities, the Westerbork footage comes with more ambivalent features, which made it a valid candidate for a heroic reading in the 1990s.[51] The empowerment that lies in the attribution of authorship to Rudolf Breslauer as cinematographer of the Westerbork footage can be interpreted as a valorising reading of the history of the camp. The interest in the footage in the 1990s was possibly fuelled by the idea that the Westerbork material had the potential to become part of a heroic narrative.

But even if, in a strictly commemorative context, the heroic depiction of Breslauer makes sense, it seems to limit and deviate from a historiographical

assessment of the footage to a critical degree. Apart from the fact that historiographical research should be free of emotions like e.g. heroism, such an idealizing picture of Breslauer fades as soon as the material is revealed to be of propagandistic and actively deviating nature, as shown in the case disputed here. The discovery of the real story behind the filming of a 'rigged' deportation in the Westerbork footage also sheds new light on the Breslauer-narrative. And here lies the connection between the heroic valorisation and the altered montage of the Westerbork footage in 1986. The vague idea - up until this montage - that a 'normal' transport had been filmed was eventually disambiguated through montage, and hence the last obstacle for a heroization was erased.

As soon as we start to question and scrutinise the Breslauer narrative, the sources for it prove to be relatively insubstantial. The alleged authorship of the German Jew and camp inmate Rudolf Breslauer largely relies on statements by the former camp commander Gemmeker during the trial against him in Holland.[52] Gemmeker tried to emphasise the documentary character of the footage, which he referred to as evidence in his favour. We might surmise that he therefore overstated Breslauer's co-authorship. In addition, the testimony of Breslauer's daughter, Chanita Moses, does not favour the theory that Breslauer filmed and produced the footage. In the interviews made before the research of Aad Wagenaar in the 1990s, she does not mention her father's involvement in the film's production.[53] Inmates involved in the filming, such as Abraham Hammelburg, even claimed not to have heard of Breslauer at all.[54] Furthermore, Wim Loeb denied Breslauer's involvement in the filming, at least during the first interview with Wagenaar.[55]

The interest in the footage as a document, and the attempts to deploy it for valorising historical readings, led to a situation in which the discourse became further alienated from the production conditions of the material. We might conclude that the editing of the RVD-film remained unnoticed thus far since it worked so well for both of the historical trends described above: the material served as footage from a regular deportation to Auschwitz, which made it resonate with one of the metanarratives of Holocaust commemoration, while, at the same time, the footage equally supported the heroizing narrative of Breslauer, in which the cameraman valiantly documented such a deportation.

Proposals for a different approach

The attempts to let the film resonate within a heroic Holocaust memory, and the first attempts to reconstruct the events filmed, are largely unsatisfying. A new approach would have to prove its advance by providing a better consonance between the footage as a whole and the historical reconstructions to which it is linked. In order to avoid the tractions explained above and instead of primary integrating it into the master narratives of the Holocaust, I suggest to approach the film by moving from the macro- to the microstructures of the genocide of the European Jews. For the time being investigated, the footage has to be freed from burden to predominantly comply with the metanarratives. The history of the 'Diamond Jews' might differ from the general fate of Dutch Jews, but it adds a

facet to the diversity of fates the genocide of the European Jews encompasses. As a microhistory it does justice to an albeit small group of individuals.

The historically encompassing structure is the persecution of Jews during World War II, including ideological circumstances, namely the imagery of National Socialistic anti-Semitism. Within this broader structure, there is the history of camp Westerbork, and the production of the movie happens within this framework. The production itself consists of preparation, shooting and minimal post-production. What follows is a history of archiving and usage, with the special circumstance of an alteration of the material in the 1980s. Eventually the history of appropriation has to be reconstructed in a manner that pays respect to fissures and contradictions. After the war, having taken part in filming for the SS was considered collaboration, and therefore was often not admitted, while, since the 1990s, participants have dared to speak about it, given new interest in such documents. The Gemmeker who, as commander, produced the film as a commemoration of his camp does not necessarily have the same intentions as the Gemmeker defending himself against accusations of genocide after the war. In order to illustrate the possibilities of such an approach, this essay will give a sketch of a different reading of the circumstances of the Westerbork film, which adds to the new findings in the prior chapters.

A different perspective

Context 1: Anti-semitic propaganda films and photos

The majority of the Westerbork footage consists of scenes showing Jewish inmates at work. The fact that the theme of 'Jews and work' was heavily exploited during anti-Semitic campaigns at the beginning of the war, and was a regular source of sarcastic jokes, adds credit to the idea that filming the Jews at work in the camp was part of a humiliating performance that would at least have served as entertainment for other anti-Semites among the commander's fellow SS-men.[56] So far, any discourse about the material has largely ignored these correlations between the Westerbork footage and the contemporary production of ideologically charged, anti-Semitic imagery, which included claims such as 'Juden lernen arbeiten' (Jews learn to work).[57]

Context 2: The film as document of the camp

The Westerbork film can be compared to Gerron's *Theresienstadtfilm*, and should be scrutinised as a kind of 'Deckvisualisierung' (covering images).[58] The filmed departure of the 'Diamond Jews' is most likely supposed to have an appeasing effect on later spectators, who were anticipated to imagine that this was what deportations were like. The working Jews can also be interpreted as covering images: the vast majority of inmates did not work in any of the workshops or facilities, but awaited their deportation devoid of any assigned activity. Unfortunately, both deceptions still seem to hold today. Additionally, considering the bureaucratic circumstances of its

making, the film contradicts dominant readings, such as the theory of the industrial film still found in current publications.[59] The prevailing theory that Gemmeker tried to convince his superiors in Berlin of the efficiency of his production can be ruled out on the basis of historiographical reconstructions of National Socialistic bureaucracy. Westerbork was a police camp, and therefore not part of the SS-WVHA, insofar revenues had not been anticipated.[60] The Vught labour camp, near the Philips factories, had been built in 1943 in order to serve such purposes. Westerbork was in a part of Holland so deserted, and very much without industry, that 'renting out' workforce would not have been convenient. Attempts to acquire work orders from local clients for the metal workshops in 1943 failed.[61] In fact, there is evidence for another explanation. Camp Westerbork did not produce value to a mentionable extent and, if the movie had been finished, it would have shown how a large part of the production was actually consumed by the inmates. The gloves, toys, bags and the products from the farm were sold in the camp's own little warehouse.[62] The recycling amounted to a sustaining system (yet made for a particularly non-sustaining population), and aimed at making the camp largely independent from aid from the outside. The camp's own money eventually allowed to maintain some kind of commerce even after the interned had been stripped of all valuables: fake money would buy goods made by fake labour. Maybe Gemmeker wanted to demonstrate precisely this: the perfect facade of a labor camp that he had managed to set up and operate exactly because it was 'cost neutral'. Again, this explanation comes without any relief. While the theory about Gemmeker wanting to turn the camp into a labour camp comes with the notion of minimal rationality - in terms of survival in exchange for value - the truth is perhaps more banal: the film was a creative attempt to document Gemmekers contributions to a more effective way of running a transit camp during the 'final solution'.

Context 3: Filming under constraint

The reliable part of the evidence handed down allows only the relatively vague interpretation that the material was produced by a number of camp inmates, who most certainly took turns operating the camera. Therefore, there is not just a single auteur whose intentions could be determined. This again narrows the chances for a unique perspective manifest in the footage. The shooting often, if not always, took place under SS surveillance. During the first attempt to film, the refusal of two dignitaries to collaborate was punished and threatened with deportation, so there can be no question about the involuntary participation of all inmates behind and in front of the camera.[63] Most of the speculations about a single, personal, artistic perspective manifest in the material are generally as implausible as they are unhelpful in adding anything to our understanding of the material, or of the context in which it was made. The fact that the dominant narrative about the making of the Westerbork film borrows largely from Gemmeker's assertions during his trial is a manifestation of an insufficient acknowledgement of coercion and constraint during the making of the movie. From this perspective, the gaps in the documentation of the camps history require more attention.

Context 4: The level of individual recognition

Finally, the footage as a medium of personal and emotional connection between spectator and filmed subjects has so far not been sufficiently acknowledged and examined.[64] It is possible to identify the persons visible in the footage. Westerbork survivor Eva Weyl, for example, recognised her father in the footage, who was present at the deportation representing the so-called Antragstelle.[65] Other survivors recognised themselves, and there are already quite a number of such references between memory and footage, many of them included in documentaries.

But there is also merit in scrutinizing the impression these pictures make on us within the-case oriented research this essay promotes. The connection between the girl in the boxcar and the Holocaust remembrance is emotionally charged. Quasi-historiographical activities – such as identifying her – do not add much to that, but they serve as a pretext to deal with this very picture, to integrate it into discussions, a picture that does not come to rest. The historiographical merit of an examination of the emotional impact of such a picture could perhaps be that it becomes a starting point for the reconstruction of the actually filmed case structure, similar to the impression of the cheerful deportees that eventually led to the discovery of the story of the 'Diamond Jews', or at least it can contribute to the hypothesis stated here. It is a naïve form of contempt with which the girl in the boxcar addresses the person filming her. It is a fatal way of being stunned about the extent of disrespect that has been applied to her. For the girl, the person filming her can only be identical with the forces of evil that have imprisoned her. She looks into the face of her tormentors, and her silent contempt is what is deeply troubling. This interpretation is irreconcilable with the heroic story of Rudolf Breslauer. But, to put it differently, maybe the Breslauer story oddly protects us from the full impact of Settela's gaze.

Holocaust remembrances have kept the picture of the girl in the boxcar in their inventory. It has been singled out, and is the iconic moment in the Westerbork footage. The narrativizations around it changed through the decades, from a Jewish girl to a Sintessa, and from a gaze at the SS-man filming to a look into Breslauer's camera. Obviously, there is no linear process of disclosing what the footage has recorded. On the contrary, narrative and content, representation and record have been in a constant process of mutual (un)balancing. Still their consonance is an objective that can be achieved and therefore must be strived for, if only as a temporary equilibrium.

Conclusion

Basically, both victimizing and heroizing approaches to the Holocaust instrumentalise archival footage, and are justified in doing so. The process of historicizing the genocide of the European Jews should undoubtedly be informed by the question of how we want to interpret our past, and cannot - and must not - be ruled by the contingency of single events or by the complexity of microstructures. Each approach was appropriate at certain times. While the victimizing perspective was helpful in anchoring the actual fact of the genocide in reluctant European societies who preferred to forget and repress those memories, today a heroic commemoration seems a better way to prepare for a resistance against the new nationalistic

and xenophobic political movements emerging all over Europe. At the same time, both approaches have problematic sides. Victimization comes with a manifestation of some kind of victory for the perpetrators, while the heroization quite obviously provides feelings of relief, problematic for a commemoration that wants to express remorse, like the official German culture of commemoration. But these questions belong to the discourse of general Holocaust commemoration, and should be handled differently to a case-oriented research of footage from the genocide of the European Jews.

As the example of the identification of Settela shows, a case-oriented approach is not necessarily exclusively found in academic surroundings, as much as heroic or victimizing undertones in the case of the Westerbork film often go along with descriptions in academic essays. There seems to be a lack of clear differentiation, which would be a desiderate mainly in the academic domain.

Obviously, archives play a crucial role in the questions discussed above. They are important because they provide documents for both needs: the historical research of the genocide of the European Jews, and the commemoration of the Holocaust. This has not been sufficiently acknowledged by archives, especially with interest in archival footage having grown over the past 25 years. The new awareness of the footage was developed from a promise of indexical richness that cannot be redeemed. The hope that the accompanying, illustrative pictures and films would ultimately prove the master narratives prevails in the new usage of footage. But this means misunderstanding the already established cultures of use: these pictures never proved anything. By attributing the burden of proof to these images and films, the Holocaust remembrances make themselves vulnerable to denial and doubt.

Such problems arise from a lack of distinction between micro-historical research of the genocide of the European Jews and public commemoration of the Holocaust. While the Westerbork footage can be part of an active Holocaust remembrance in documentaries and keynotes, it should *also* be subject of historiographical scrutiny of the genocide of the European Jews. The problem is a zone in which academic research and quasi-historiographical representation in documentaries seem to blend into each other. On the one hand, the public discourse likes to refer to the academic domain, and at the same time academics integrate parts of the Holocaust remembrances into historiographical research about the genocide of the European Jews without the necessary caution. Instead of exploring the possibilities (or incommensurateness) of a connection between archival footage and history's dominant narratives, academic discourse around Holocaust footage sometimes seems to act as if the solution to the problem could be a simple change of perspective: that the right attitude will do the trick. But there is no easy translation from one to the other. Evidence and documents of the genocide of the European Jews do not free us from the responsibility to negotiate narratives for remembrances, narratives that reduce complexity, but keep the memory of this crime against humanity as a warning for later generations.

This essay is not trying to prove that archival footage can't generally be used as sources. The problem is also not that these films contradict our general narratives in a way that would call for corrections. The footage – in terms of records of certain cases – simply cannot comply with generalised narratives of history, at least not to a satisfying extent. The fact that the regime in Westerbork was largely

non-violent – one of the reasons why a film could be made there – does not add anything of value to our general knowledge that the SS ran those camps almost entirely in an unbelievably brutal and sadistic fashion. Also in Holland.

The new insights into the Westerbork film raise various questions. Previous research about the Westerbork footage must be examined and questioned on the basis of the newly surfaced, older, 'more original' version. How does the new footage affect general theories about Westerbork, and the production of the Westerbork film? What were the intentions behind the editing of the version circulating since 1986, and who made it? Where is the rest of the unedited film? Did the original succession of shots (found in the Riod footage) have an effect on the uses before 1986 discernable from the uses afterwards?

To conclude more generally, documents of the genocide of the European Jews should be questioned and scrutinised until they disclose as much of their provenance and the history of their handing down as possible. Only then should we bring them into a dialogue with the current discourse about the genocide. Since this discourse keeps on shifting gradually, such a process will by no means ever reach an end or final conclusions. By adding a layer to the history of the Westerbork material, I mean to perpetuate a culture of working with the historicization of the genocide of the European Jews that will hopefully encourage other historians to partake in the future.[66]

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Notes

1. See Jay Leyda, *Film beget films* (London, 1964); Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *Memory and the Holocaust in a Global Age* (Philadelphia, 2006).
2. Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, 'Trophy, Evidence, Document', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 36, no. 4 (2016): 522.
3. Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (London, 2000), 15.
4. Lindeperg, Westerbork. 'Das doppelte Spiel des Films', in *Aufschub – Das Lager Westerbork und der Film von Rudolf Breslauer/Harun Farocki*, ed. Florian Krautkrämer (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2018), 47; Thomas Elsaesser, 'Holocaust

memory and the Epistemology of Forgetting?' in Harun Farocki, *Against What? Against Whom?* ed. Antje Ehmann & Kodwo Eshun (London, 2009), 58. Farocki refers in *Respite* (2007) to it in the intertitles: 'A man smiled at the camera' (00:18:53), 'The deportees were afraid of what might await them-', 'but they didn't know what Auschwitz was' (00:19:34); Ines Dussel writes: 'some calm and even gentle manners appear, as when a prisoner helps close the door of a wagon or when food is loaded for the trip'. Quoted in 'Truth in Propagandistic Images', *Historia y Memoria de la Educación*, 8 (2018): 59–95.

5. See Didi-Huberman, *Remontagen der erlittenen Zeit*, 141; Rascaroli, *'Transits. Essayistic Thinking at the junctures of Images in Harun Farocki's Respite and Arnaud des Palliere's Drancy Avenir'*, in *Holocaust Intersections,* ed. Axel Bangert, Robert S. C. Gordon and Libby Saxton (London, 2013), 73; Elsaesser, 'Holocaust Memory and the Epistemology of Forgetting? Re-Wind and Postponement in Respite', in *Harun Farocki: Against what? Against whom?* ed. Antje Ehmann and Kodwo Eshun (London, 2009), 68.
6. Camp Westerbork was initially constructed by the Dutch in 1939 rather as an independent living quarter for Jewish émigrés from Germany and Austria. In the beginning, it consisted of housing units for families and all kinds of facilities that were needed for the approximately 1000 inhabitants. When its function was changed towards a transit camp for the deportations to the death camps in Poland by the SS in 1942, the camp was enlarged and a fence was built, but the infrastructure was kept intact.
7. There are hints to other possible ways in which the footage was preserved, but none can be proven beyond hearsay. A full record of these stories can be found in the brochure by Broersma and Rossing from 1997.
8. This was actually indifferent to the use of the footage in *Night and Fog*, as here Jews are (with one exception) not mentioned explicitly, but the picture already had become an icon in Holland in the 1950s. Jacob Presser in 1965 is the first to call her 'the Jewish girl' in a historical record that was also published internationally (see Presser, *Ondergang,* Part 2 (Amsterdam, 1965), 289).
9. See Lindeperg, *Night and Fog* (2014).
10. It is supposed to be the only known film footage of a deportation of *Western* European Jews to the death camps.
11. It is not clear, if the girl whose Christian name was Anna Maria, actually was called Blieta and not Settela. See Wagenaar, *Settela* (Marshwood, Dorset, 2016), 119.
12. See Wagenaar, *Settela*, and the documentary *Gezicht van het verleden* (1994) by Cherry Duyns.
13. See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-9/westerbork-films/ (accessed July 4, 2019).
14. In fact, until very recently some parts of the original footage were hosted at the Eye-institute and others at Beeld en Geluid. Currently staff at Beeld en Geluid is working on a compilation using all existing materials.
15. Other than often stated, the Westerbork footage has many close-ups and the people filmed often engage with the camera, sometimes smiling, sometimes greeting.

16. Peter Forgacs acknowledges this aspect in his movie *Meanwhile somewhere… 1940-1943* (1994), where he compiles the Westerbork footage with private home movies from the time. Ines Dussel refers to "scenes that depict a community that appears quietly as in a family gathering" in her essay 'Truth in Propagandistic Images', *Historia y Memoria de la Educación* 8 (2018): 59–95.
17. The Ordnungsdienst was a group of (up to 150) male inmates, led by the Austrian Arthur Pisk, who was acting as a kind of internal police inside the camp. They mainly maintained order during the deportations. See NIOD archive, signature 250i.
18. The two best known and most influential reports about Westerbork are by Philip Mechanicus, deported in January 1944 and Etty Hillesum, deported in September 1943. The footage was most likely shot between March and June 1944. The majority of the so-called Alte Kampinsassen (old camp inmates), who are responsible for most of the reports about Westerbork, had left the camp on privileged transports for Theresienstadt in January and February 1944.
19. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Part 8, Volume 2 (Amsterdam, 1969), 736 and 773.
20. The Dutch illustrator Jo Spier for example was publicly accused of collaboration with the SS based on sketches from the filmsets of the *Theresienstadtfilm* that were found in his luggage when he returned to the Netherlands in 1945.
21. See the approaches of Georges Didi-Huberman and Sven Kramer.
22. Presser, *Ondergang,* Part 2 (Amsterdam, 1965), 289, (my translation).
23. See Doßmann, '*Bilder aus dem Lager Westerbork*', in *Aufschub – Das Lager Westerbork und der Film von Rudolf Breslauer/Harun Farocki,* ed. Krautkrämer (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2018). Though Broersma and Rossing name a list of sources, they don't reference their findings and assumptions in a way that would make it possible to verify them. In addition, a lot of their information is derived from telephone interviews, some of it in contradiction to other statements of the same persons elsewhere.
24. See for example Lindeperg, '*Westerbork: Das doppelte Spiel des Films*', in *Aufschub – Das Lager Westerbork und der Film von Rudolf Breslauer/Harun Farocki*, Hrsg. Krautkrämer, Florian (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2018), S.21–62.
25. The author is currently writing his dissertation about the Westerbork footage at the Filmuniversity Babelsberg in Potsdam. The discoveries that are presented here are part of that research.
26. A number of shots that were not part of the canonical version were called 'outtakes' by Broersma and Rossing in 1997.
27. The footage shows altogether three trains: two incoming trains from Amsterdam and one outgoing to Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen which usually is referred to as 'the third train'. After I had finished the first draft of this article, in May 2019 Beeld en Geluid ordered a full digitization of all remaining Westerbork film materials. During this process, the uncut footage I am talking about in this essay was found in form of a strip of negative material.
28. So far it is only possible to assess the famous part of the third train, since the rest of the original material still awaits discovery.

29. The wrongly so called 'original' footage is online available in a fair transfer: https://www.openbeelden.nl/media/958723 (accessed October 20, 2018).
30. The edited RVD-material was used for the first time in *Vrouwen in het spoor van Anne Frank 'De Laatste Zeven Maanden'* directed by Willy Lindwer in 1988.
31. In preparation of the application for the UNESCO world document heritage Beeld en Geluid gathered a list with all the material they own. The edition that I call RIOD footage and which I obtained from Yad Vashem is not part of this list. Beeld en Geluid declared in its application for the UNESCO world document heritage, that the footage was assembled in 1986 at the RVD, but it doesn't give a record about the alteration of the material.
32. For details about this discovery see the documentary *Gezicht van het verleden* by Cerry Duyns (1994) or Farockis *Respite* (2007), where the reconstruction of the deportation's date is repeated, unacknowledged.
33. Since the reconstruction of the transport's date with the help of Frouwke Kroons suitcase by Broersma and Rossing is plausible, I assume that the transport was filmed on May 19th, 1944.
34. The diagram does not show, where the *order of shots within one roll* was changed, therefore the change might seem less severe than it actually is. In fact there are 19 edits.
35. Fluff balls and fibers on the film allow to assess how the shots were divided and combined. Footage that comes from one can (about 2 minutes of film) has usually the same patterns. Regularly footage from one can has been used in various places. Not all cases of re-editing can be found this way, but a considerable number. The NIOD archive hosts a letter from Agfa with the recommendation to clean the camera more often in order to avoid such effects (NIOD 250i, H1945_186b(3)).
36. In Reel one (20:21), out of 127 shots (average 9 sec. per shot), 80 (62%) were edited. In Reel two (21:53), out of 114 shots (11,5 sec. per shot), 58 (50%) were edited. Reel three (18:29) has 178 shots (6 sec. per shot), with 65 (37%) edited. Reel 4 (21:31) has 203 shots (6 sec. average), with 86 (42%) are edited. Of 622 shots in total, there are 289 edits (46%).
37. Perhaps the most obvious case of editing is the deportee pointing to something 'behind the camera' followed by the famous shot with the large white wheel-stretcher. In the original footage it remains unclear what the person is actually referring to.
38. Peter Forgacs for example speculates in an interview from 2001 that the quasi selfdeportation of the Jews in Westerbork was the outcome of deception – the evidence provided here rather points to that this verdict was partially the outcome of clever editing. (See: http://mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ37/DeirdreBoyle.htm).
39. The father of Jacob Presser worked in the diamond industry and he mentions the Diamond Jews in *Ondergang* (Amsterdam, 1965). The Holocaust survivor Catharina Soep (her story has been preserved in the documentary *Steal a pencil for me* (2007)) was among the diamond workers and was deported on the train documented in the film. The list of deportees for May 19th names 238 persons with professions in the diamond-industry (NIOD 250i, 232). See also: http://db.yadvashem.org/deportation/transportDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5092550

40. See the record of this meeting at Yad Vashem archives, Eichmann Trial, TR.3, Dokument 1352.
41. In the RVD-film, the shot with the stretcher is inserted shortly before the train departs, so that the less populated platform in the rear appears consistent with the chronology. In fact, Frouwke Kroon, the woman on the stretcher, is the only Jewish deportee to Auschwitz recorded by the film. Most likely as a result of her handicap, she arrived belatedly at the platform, and was wheeled towards the deportees embarking for Bergen Belsen. When the mistake was discovered, she was consequently wheeled back to the rear of the train.
42. The illustrations were designed by Chriegel Farner. The arrows show the directions the camera is aiming. Since the Westerbork film never shows the section between boxcar 16 (the one with the girl in the door) and the last wagon in full, there is an uncertainty about how long the train was exactly. It consisted of at least 19 wagons, so the illustration shows those, but it is possible that it actually consisted of 20 or even 21 wagons. In the film, it only seems, as if the camera did film the entire train while leaving. In fact the camera twice stops filming while the wagons are passing by, which leads to almost invisible but traceable jump cuts. This technique has not been used in any other instance in the footage, which supports the theory, that the material was shot by several cinematographers.
43. Essays by Sylvie Lindeperg, Thomas Elsaesser, Laura Rascaroli, Sven Kramer, George Didi-Huberman and others made assumptions about the content of the film on the basis of the RVD-film.
44. This development has several reasons. Access to former soviet archives after the end of the Warsaw pact and the surfacing of new documents from private collections are practical reasons. The use of diaries and survival literature shifted the focus of historiographical research from a perpetrator perspective more and more to a balanced one, that also included the records of victims (see for example Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 1997).
45. So far, the author evaluated roughly 50 such uses between 1955 and 1982.
46. Even in those cases where the provenance is addressed, the footage sometimes is partially - and deliberately - misused: Lou de Jong for example takes footage from the farm-chapter shot in 1944 to illustrate a passage about building camp Westerbork in 1939.
47. It's a discourse that, by the time, is still in the process of reaching a hegemonial consensus.
48. Farocki, while showing the entire footage of the trains in *Respite* (2007) only omits the so-called 'second train', which could be interpreted as respecting its iconic status.
49. This acknowledgement was mainly attributed to Harun Farockis Essayfilm *Respite* (2007), which presents these finds without reference to Duyns and Wagenaar. A fact that has been pointed out already by Elsaesser (1999), Lindeperg (2018) and Kramer (2014).
50. See: *Tagungsbericht - Die Erinnerung an die Shoah an Orten ehemaliger Konzentrationslager in West- und Osteuropa. Geschichte, Repräsentation und Geschlecht.* Europäische Sommer-Universität Ravensbrück, 15.09.2008 – 19.09.2008

Ravensbrück, in H-Soz-Kult, 14.01.2009, www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-2469

51. Filmfootage that was recorded by the allied forces during the liberation of the camps after World War II is regularly referred to as atrocity films. The term liberation films has only been introduced recently into the debate.
52. They, however, do not even turn out to be as clear as they are reproduced. Also interesting is the fact, that Gemmeker only named Breslauer, even though at least six other inmates had helped to produce the film. Breslauer was the only of those seven who had not survived and therefore couldn't be questioned.
53. Chanita Moses (born in 1928 as Ursula Breslauer) is quite cautious when it comes to her contemporary knowledge about the filming. During the interview in *Kamp Westerbork, de film* (2010, Karel van den Berg) and in an undated video-interview that is preserved in the Yad Vahem archive she explains, that she has no insider knowledge about the production; when she is asked during the interview preserved at Yad Vashem, if her father talked about what he had filmed to the family, she right away answers: 'no'. In an earlier testimony about her life from 1994 she doesn't mention the film at all (Holocaust survival testimonies, Yad Vashem Archives). Despite the fact that she has a very vivid memory about her time in the camp, where she worked regularly with her father in his lab, she does not recall her father to have talked to her about his involvement. Of course it is possible that he worked on the film without telling her about it.
54. See the interview in Broersma and Rossing, *Westerbork gefilmd* (1997), p.44: 'Ik heb geloof ik één keer een klein stukje diensdagtransport gefilmd. Tevens heb ik in de Grote Zaal wel eens filmapparatuur en lampen opgesteld, omdat 's avonds de cabaretvoorstelling zou worden gefilmd. Dat was het geloof ik wel. Ik heb volgens mij zelfs nooit contact met Breslauer gehad. Ik kende die man helemaal niet', translates as: 'I think I filmed a small piece of the Tuesday transport once. I also used to set up film equipment and lamps in the Great Hall, because the cabaret show would be filmed in the evening. That was it, I think. I think I never even had contact with Breslauer. I didn't know that man at all'.
55. Wagenaar, *Settela*, 43.
56. Habbo Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild* (Hamburg, 2001), 110.
57. See Scharnberg, 'Juden lernen arbeiten'! in *Judenfeindschaft und Antisemitismus in der deutschen Presse über fünf Jahrhunderte*, ed. Michael Nagel/Moshe Zimmermann (Bremen, 2013), 848; Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild*, 110.
58. Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild*, 102.
59. See Moller, *Zeitgeschichte sehe*n (Berlin: Bertz + Fischer, 2018) and Krautkrämer, *Aufschub – Das Lager Westerbork und der Film von Rudolf Breslauer/Harun Farocki* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2018).
60. Other than the police camps, the SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt were running the concentration camps also with clear economical interest.
61. See report by Schlesinger, NIOD 250i, doc 511.
62. The warehouse was called Lawa (**La**ger**wa**renhaus), see NIOD 250i, doc 695.
63. Gemmeker visited the Christian church service on the 5.3.1944 with a camera team. When the pastor Stul Tabaksblat and Max Enker refused to cooperate and

left the church, they were put into the prison barrack for two weeks and were threatened with deportation. This incident has been reported by both, Gemmeker and Tabaksblat during the trial in 1947 in Holland (See NIOD 250i, Dokument 1008-1010).

64. Harun Farocki in fact does address this aspect in his film *Respite* (2007).
65. Information gathered during a telephone interview with Eva Weyl Nov. 18th, 2018.
66. See Achim Landwehrs concept of *Chronoferenz* in: Landwehr, *Die anwesende Abwesenheit der Vergangenheit*, Frankfurt am Main 2016.

Notes on contributor

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