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Wolff's Greatest Accomplishment

The Holocaust will always be remembered as a dark spot in the history books and, more importantly, in the lives of those it affected. During the period of Nazi Occupation, eleven nations and their people were changed forever. The constant persecution and mass genocide perpetrated by Hitler's Germany during the Holocaust were widespread and felt across many of Europe's ethnic and social groups. However, European Jews and those who sought to help them felt the greatest impact. Within this class of people, no country was hit harder, in terms of utter loss of life, than the Netherlands. During the period of Nazi occupation, 140,000 Jews were thought to have resided in the Netherlands. Of this massive group of people, only twenty-seven percent are believed to have survived (Croes 474). This chaos, however, did not deter those who sought to help others and protect them from Nazi persecution. Belonging to this category is Annemie Wolff, a non-Jewish photographer. Annemie's help came in a unique form, the photography of 434 Jewish people (Pine). Annemie's defiance of the Nazi regime and her unwillingness to idly stand by while others were persecuted shone through as a beam of hope in an age of darkness.

While the exact purpose of her photographs is not entirely known, it is speculated that Wolff was part of a resistance group of photographers. This underground network of photographers sought to help the Jewish people by providing photographs for falsified documents, such as passports or immigration papers (Pine). Due to the fact that Wolff was not Jewish, she was able to operate her business without being asked questions as to her purpose or background (Realityweb). This resistance, however, took place on both a micro and macro scale, and many of these portraits held a far greater

purpose-- greater than faking passports. These photographs were oftentimes the only mementos of a lost family member or child whom people had left. Many times, Jewish people residing in South Amsterdam would have these pictures taken soon before they were deported or sent to concentration camps, making the happy faces in Wolff's portraits all the more saddening ("Almost Lost").

The Holocaust showed humanity's faults and the drastic consequences of them on a massive scale. The remembrance of the people who were affected by the Holocaust is necessary, so that it will not be repeated. Therefore, although Wolff's resistance held massive importance in the past, the effect it will have on humanity today may be its greatest accomplishment.

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