

Bep-Rie Gomperts-Gerritse, born May 4, 1938 in Amsterdam, Netherlands, discusses being an only child due to the onset of the war. Her father was Abraham Gerritse and her mother was Jeanette (née Gritsse ?, originally from Antwerp). Her paternal grandparents were Machiel Gerritse and Rebecca (Geltfisch, originally from Dinslagen, Germany); her maternal grandparents were David Grittse (?) and Julia (Fuldauer?).

Bep-Rie says she had a middle class life; her father was a tobacco broker, her mother a hairdresser. Because her parents were politically active and followed the situation in Germany and E. Europe, they were not surprised by the war's spread. Her grandfather was politically active and was sent to a camp for being a Communist, not a Jew. She says that 108,000 of Amsterdam's (Holland's?) 120,000 Jews were killed in the war, which she blames on the Judenrat's providing files on local Jews to the Nazis. Her family was preparing to go into hiding when her father was caught in one of the early round-ups. She and her mother were able to avoid arrest by her mother's dramatic fainting in front of the Nazis, after which they went into hiding. Notwithstanding what some did to help, Bep-Rie says that most Dutch stood by without intervening with many also not understanding the full scale of what Jews experienced.

They hid at first in the south of the city under a not so difficult situation. In this and other moves, she was often helped by her "de facto", non-Jewish uncle (Hank Laudakis?), the partner of her Aunt Berta. He was active in the Resistance and they married after the war. She and her mother then went to the Hague, hiding with a Catholic family. Her mother was jailed for a while in August/September 1944 in Scheveningen, and then moved to a transit camp, Westerborg, in the east of the country, where her paternal grandparents were also held. Due to bombed rail lines, they could go no farther and remained there until the end of the war. During this time, Bep-Rie remained with a Christian family in the West. Though she was eager to start school after her sixth birthday in May, the difficult wartime conditions of 1944 and lack of food made that difficult and inconsistent. Bep stayed with a male schoolmate, with whose family she became close, near Amsterdam's waterworks during the severe winter of 1944. Nazi V1 or V2 rockets were stationed nearby. She remained there until liberated in early May 1945.

Her mother returned to her the transit camp in June, 1945; Bep-Rie considered this to be normal and expected as her youth had prevented her realizing how dangerous the war could be. Bep-Rie's foster-parents did not resist the reunion, unlike many other foster parents, and remained close to her and her family. Her mother used the rehabilitation program of the Save The Children to move to Copenhagen in May, 1946 for six months, then returning to Amsterdam.

Her mother remarried in 1952, a man described by as sick and disturbed man. She lived by herself at 16 working at an insurance company while her parents sought mental health care in Rotterdam. Ultimately, her parents divorced.

Bep-Rie says her Jewishness was always part of her professed identity, but she was not religious. Yet, she wanted a Jewish husband and Jewish children. She married a Dutch Jewish citizen who had grown up in Surinam, a former colony. After three children, her husband, who was working hard in multiple positions, was not fond of Dutch weather. Ultimately, they emigrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1978.