

# Historical Analysis: Packet #2

In *Unspoken*, Noam and Jonah undertake historical research to solve the mystery surrounding the early life of Heinrich, Noam's grandfather. Now, you'll get to use your historian skills to analyze documents and then present your findings to your colleagues.

Your theme is **LGBTQ+ resistance to the Nazi regime**. Below you'll find a set of documents from the archives for your review.

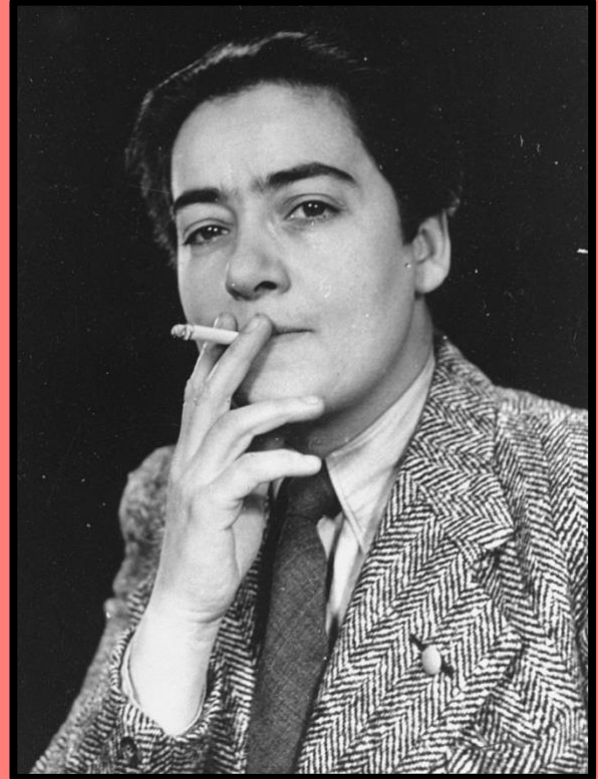
As a first step, watch "[They're Enemies of the State!](#)" as preliminary research to gather background information. Then, together with your partner or small group, analyze the documents by answering the discussion questions. You'll then present your findings to your class.

# Frieda Belinfante

## Photographs & Oral History Testimony



Frieda Belinfante with her cello, in approximately 1920 (age 16).



Portrait of Frieda Belinfante, approximately 1943.

1. What can we learn about Frieda Belinfante from these photographs?
2. What are the differences between the two photographs? Are there any similarities?
3. What are possible explanations for Frieda's differing appearances in the two photographs?

**Frieda Belinfante, who identified as lesbian, provided her testimony during an 8-hour interview in May 1994. She was 90 years old. Below is an excerpt of the transcript from the interview.**

*Note: ellipses (...) indicate portions of the interview that have been left out of the transcript in order to keep the transcript short enough for this lesson.*

**Interviewer:** Can you tell us about your life after the German occupation in 1940?  
[*Note: the interviewer is referencing the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940.*]

**Frieda Belinfante:** I really led a little bit of a different kind of life. Something that was right up my alley...I was asked to join that resistance group...Headquarters didn't want women in the attack on City Hall. We never got an active part. I only got the part in the preparation. They met once a week, first once a month, but that was not enough. It became once a week, and later, we didn't meet because it was too dangerous. But I would get news through Rudy. And Rudy didn't know where I lived, and I didn't know where Rudy lived. But we had always from week to week, a point on the street somewhere, where we could meet each other...The day that I didn't see Rudy when I was supposed to meet him...I knew something was wrong, so I better disappear.

**Interviewer:** How was the plan developed to attack the population register and why did you want to destroy the population register?

**Frieda Belinfante:** Well, because we were given all the regular IDs and the Jews had the J on it. So, if you gave them a false one, you had to make a fake number on it, because all the ones were numbered and had a duplicate in City Hall...We had an unlimited number of false cards. We could give any Jewish person a false identity card, but there would not be a duplicate with the same number in City Hall. So, when we realized that there would be thousands of false cards in circulation, then in the meeting we said, we have to destroy that, because when one person discovers that this card is false, they'll know that there are false cards in circulation. So, that's when the plan immediately got taken up...

I said, we have to destroy it...When they [the resistance group] finally had it all prepared, they knew how to cope with all the few things that went a little bit different from what they expected...they did successfully blow the thing up. I remember, I was on the roof. It was going to be done at night, as soon as it was dark. I think it was on a Saturday, and I was on the roof to see whether I could hear something, because they didn't want any women there at all...I think because the main attackers were policemen and to be disguised as a policeman for a man is easier than for a woman. Also, because it was physically a pretty hard job...However, women could have brought in some of the explosions, some of the things that were not too heavy to carry.

**Interviewer:** When did you disguise yourself as a man?

**Frieda Belinfante:** It was right after the other people were arrested, and I couldn't go home...I disguised as a man...and tried to continue to do what I did before and that was distribute more [false] identity cards...A friend of mine had the same figure, the same height, and had a three piece suit that fit me to a tee...So, I was a little heavier set little man, and I had to buy a hat, the smallest hat that I ever found, and it still had to have a band in it to fit my little head...I went into the barber shop and I took my hat off and put it on the hook, and the barber walked up to me and said "What do you want, sir, a shave or a haircut?" And I said, "No, just a haircut!" And he didn't bat an eye...I had a cold and it helped to get my voice a little down. I talked like that all the time, and I got used to it pretty soon. For three months, I was disguised as a man and very successfully so...I passed my mother several times, during that time, and she never recognized me.

4. What new information does this interview transcript provide to help us understand the two photographs of Frieda?
5. If you could ask Frieda one question during an interview, what would it be?
6. Why do you think Frieda chose to use a disguise rather than flee and leave Amsterdam?

# Report Out

After analyzing evidence, historians must communicate their findings. You'll do so in two ways:

**First**, with your partner or small group, write up a brief biographical paragraph about Frieda Belinfante using the information from the documents. Then read or present your paragraph to your classmates. As you're writing your paragraph, think about: what do you want your classmates to know about Belinfante personally, and what overall lessons did you learn from these sources that you would like to teach your classmates?

**Second**, communicating your findings can be tricky, especially when there are gaps in the information. Documents rarely tell us a complete story. Write a few sentences identifying what information you would like to know but that these sources don't tell you. How might you find that information? Where would you look?