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**Hacohen, Shmuel                      Tape 1 of 8**

- 1.01    Shmuel Ben Jacob Hacohen was born in Amsterdam on July 7, 1926, and was the 6<sup>th</sup> of 7 children. His father was from Friesland. His mother's family (Brandon) was of Portuguese origin.

All of tape 1 is a very detailed description of both families, 80 of whom were killed in the Holocaust.

**Tape 2 of 8**

- 2.00    Continuation of description of family members and life in Amsterdam. Detailed description of his childhood.
- 2.24    Tells of a mentally ill cousin in an institution in Appleburg. In 1943, Germans killed all inmates and staff.
- 3.34    In 1944, Germans announced that those who came out of hiding would be sent to prisoner exchange camps. His aunt came out and was sent to Bergen Belsen.
- 3.44    Talks about Yopp Westerwel and his underground activities. His uncle was saved by him in 1943.
- 3.45    After his father's death, his mother took in refugees from Germany. Describes people.
- 4.06    Talks about long standing anti-Semitism in Holland.
- 6.44    1939, overheard a conversation about illegal immigration on the boat "Dora." His brother went to Palestine.
- 7.00    Found the "Brown Book" that described the horrors of concentration camps.

**Tape 3 of 8**

- 7.12    Talks about the media coverage in 1939, in Holland about the happenings in Europe.
- 8.02    September 1939, beginning of war. Talks about food restrictions, National Socialism in Holland, and call up to Dutch army. Detailed description of friends.
- 8.47    May 10, 1940, the German invasion of Holland. Describes closing of schools, air raids, and Holland's defeat after a 4-day bombardment of Rotterdam, and Queen's exit to England.
- 9.02    250 refugee Jews from Germany committed suicide. Schools reopened and life went back to routine.

- 9.03 1940, he was 15 years old. Talks about Holland's complete surrender and acceptance of Germans. Those who saved Jews were few, 3% of the population.
- 9.12 October 1940, all Dutch bureaucrats signed the Arian proclamation. He claims that the Dutch collaborated with the Germans.
- 9.18 Rationing of food, hunger, and registration of everything. He says that the pedantic registration by the Dutch made it easy for the Germans to catch the Jews and their assets.
- 9.27 January 1941, registration of Jews organized by the Dutch Interior Ministry.
- 9.30 1941, attacks on Jewish quarters in Amsterdam by Dutch fascists. Jews and communists fought back. Germans asked a group of prominent Jews to create a Judenrat.
- 9.35 February 1941, young Jewish men were collected in a square, loaded on trucks that went to Buchenwald and then Mauthausen. Communists demonstrated against it.
- 9.46 Jewish life was regulated by the Judenrat. All Jews lost their jobs and had to volunteer for work camps.

**Tape 4 of 8**

- 10.00 1941, Judenrat and registration of all Jews.
- 10.10 Death notices in Jewish paper of the 400 who were sent to Mauthausen. Judenrat tried to explain and minimize.
- 10.14 Summer 1941, German order to give up copperware and brass. Work camp.
- 10.21 ID cards were distributed by Dutch government.
- 10.30 Dutch government made detailed maps of where Jews lived in Amsterdam. He claims that Dutch government did more than the Germans demanded, which helped to deliver the Jews.
- 10.37 Germans and Dutch built bunkers against British air attacks.
- 10.45 Jews knew of the existence of Westerborg, but did not know what was going on there.
- 10.50 Jewish children could no longer attend non-Jewish schools.
- 10.58 1942, introduction of the yellow patch.

- 11.04 Talks about the collaboration of the Judenrat with the Germans and the Dutch. He ascribes it to stupidity and the Dutch docile, submissive character.
- 11.18 All Jews from surrounding villages had to go to Amsterdam. Describes the crowding.
- 11.25 May – June, 1942, first rumors of deportations. The underground sent messages about the situation to England, but they did not want to be bothered.
- 11.45 Describes call up orders that friends received to go to work camps. Friend tried to escape to France but was caught.
- 11.54 First rumors about Auschwitz and Birkenau.
- 12.16 July 5, 1942, first train transport in the middle of the night to Westerborg. People believed it would not happen to them.
- 12.25 Describes his sisters' and husbands' transport to Westerborg and then to Auschwitz.
- 12.38 Describes atmosphere of dread and waiting.

**Tape 5 of 8**

- 13.12 April 1943, describes his transport to Westerborg, his arrival, and life in Bunk 72.
- 13.41 Description of the pseudo-normal organization of life in Camp Westerborg; the camp hierarchy; the hospital, concerts, opera and cabarets organized from Jews from Berlin. Talks about the total denial of death by people in Westerborg. Hachshara group organized.
- 15.50 January 1944, first transport of Zionists and the Hachshara group, including himself, to Bergen Belsen. They were happy, thought they were going to an exchange camp. 2,000 people went on that train.

**Tape 6 of 8**

- 16.16 Describes arrival in Bergen Belsen and the fair conditions at the beginning.
- 16.28 He was in Bunk 13 with 100 other people. Describes this.
- 16.36 Talks about Saloniki Jews who were at the top of the hierarchy and the friction between Ashkenasi and Sephardic Jews.
- 16.47 Describes punitive appeals (???) and jobs that were invented.
- 16.54 Deterioration of conditions; 11 hours of work and 500 calories a day.

- 17.02 Talks about two people whose job it was to remove gold teeth.
- 17.04 Describes the state of mind that helped him survive.
- 17.20 Describes first hospital in Bergen Belsen run by Jewish doctors and nurses. Germans did not enter.
- 17.22 Bergen Belsen was an assembly place for shoes from all over Germany. Everybody worked on taking apart shoes.
- 17.31 Describes his stay in the hospital.
- 17.34 Saw hundreds of allied airplanes.
- 17.43 At appeal(????), names were called of a group going to Palestine. The second group really went.
- 17.49 Talks about RAV chief of work command who was a notorious sadist and Jew hater. Describes punishment and terrible hunger.
- 17.56 Describes lice plague.
- 18.15 Describes terrible summer of heat and lice. American air attack on storage barracks in camp.
- 18.25 Describes extreme overcrowding caused by stream of inmates from other camps near the Russian front.
- 18.26 Talks about various patients in the hospital. The many deaths from Typhoid fever and dysentery and TB.
- 18.55 Talks in detail of his psychological state of mind.

**Tape 7 of 8**

- 19.16 Autumn, 1944, talks about women arriving from Auschwitz. The chaotic conditions in the camp.
- 19.25 He got typhoid fever and went to the hospital.
- 19.36 March 1945, Himmler offers the Dutch government to let the Jews go to Sweden if the Dutch paid. The Dutch government disregarded the offer.
- 19.47 Kramer from Auschwitz came with the Polish Kapos to bring order to the chaotic camp.
- 19.53 Last days of Bergen Belsen. Thousands of dead bodies buried in mass graves.

- 20.01 Yupp Weiss organized a Jewish community camp. Passover 1945, Yupp Weiss talked to them about impending liberation.
- 20.10 April 9, 1945, gates of camp were opened. Describes the last days of camp.
- 20.19 Describes the 2-week long train ride between Russian and American camps. Of 2,000, only 300 survived the ride.
- 20.39 Russians “gave” them an abandoned village where they found hoarded food. Many got dysentery.
- 20.48 He was taken to Risa, north of Leipzig to a Polish POW camp. He got typhoid fever.
- 21.10 Description of his illness and recuperation.
- 21.26 They were organized to go back to Holland. Describes train trips, return to Amsterdam and meeting with friends and family. He stayed in a hospital in Amsterdam until the fall of 1945 and, then, he was released to his uncle.
- Tape 8 of 8
- 22.00 Describes the time after his return; his state of mind. He talks about anti-Semitism in Holland after the war.
- 22.11 Beginning of 1946, describes his lack of roots and identity. Received no help in readjusting. He blames the Dutch for not giving him restitution. Decided to immigrate to Israel and joined the Jewish Brigade in Belgium.
- 22.16 Describes his trip in a caravan of trucks carrying 750 Jews through Belgium and France until they got to a small port in Marseille. He got on a boat in April of 1946.
- 22.23 Describes the 2-week boat ride and his arrival in Atlit. He then went to a kibbutz.
- 22.27 Talks about his long period of adjustment.

He wrote a book about his experiences.