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Oral history interview with Baruch Hod

Interview date: June 28, 1993

Summary

Videotape testimony of Baruch H., who was born in Utrecht, the Netherlands in 1924, one of four children. He recounts his happy childhood; his father's secularism and Zionism; attending public school; cordial relations with non-Jews; his mother's illness; his father's military draft as veterinarian in 1940; German invasion in May; anti-Jewish restrictions including expulsion from school, his father's dismissal from his job, confiscation of valuables, and compulsory wearing of the yellow star; his father's decision to hide the family in different locations in summer 1942; entrusting valuables to non-Jewish friends; a priest arranging for him to hide with a Catholic farm family; praying and attending church with them; obtaining false papers as a non-Jew from the underground; his father's visit; a warning of denouncement; leaving with his father; hiding with non-Jews in several locations, including an impoverished farm in Almelo for six months; fleeing when the farmer's wife tried to seduce him; briefly staying with his older sister, a nurse who lived as non-Jew; a last visit with his mother (she died in a sanatorium); and moving to a farm in Lunteren in fall 1943.

Mr. H. recounts joining the underground; organizing hiding places, collecting air-dropped weapons, gathering information, writing articles, and assisting Allied parachutists escape; arrest; exposure as a Jew which saved him from execution as a resistant; a severe beating and gang rapes by Germans; being forced to watch a prisoner being tortured; transfer to a villa from which he escaped; returning to the farm where he had previously hidden; moving often with assistance from the underground; liberation by Canadian troops; denouncing a Nazi working for the Canadians; returning home; reunion with his father and sisters; his family reburying his mother as a Jew; briefly attending university; emotional problems due to his experiences; hospitalization; joining a Zionist organization; locating hidden Jewish orphans; helping smuggle Jews and weapons to Palestine; meeting his future wife at a Hechalutz orphanage; and joining his father and sisters in Israel in 1948. Mr. H. discusses continuing emotional problems and nightmares; his career as an educator; not sharing his experiences with his family until recently; feeling haunted by having to kill others as part of the underground; and attending a reunion of his underground unit in Holland in the 1970s.