

RG-50.120 #193
KEINI, MOSHE

Born Max Kchechover-Cohen in Cologne Germany. Parents had come from Galicia and lived in community of east European Jews in Cologne.

October 1938. 30,000 Polish Jews were transported to the Polish border among them his mother, brother and 3 sisters. Father and he were not at home at the time of the round-up and stayed.

Witnessed clashes between nazis and communists and rise of antisemitism. There were 20,000 Jews in Cologne.

Nov. 1938, after kristalnacht, he asked his father to help him get to Holland.

02.28 Description of train travel to Holland. The Dutch sent the Jewish children back and he succeeded only on the third try. A Dutch Jew took him in, sent parcels to his mother in Poland, brought his father out of Dachau. Father got to England and volunteered into the British army. Went to Israel in 1948.

03.05 Dutch hid 20,000 Jews, some for money and some were betrayed.

Describes life in a children's home in Westersel[?] in a beautiful villa near Rotterdam. Describes life and the work study program there.

03.44 May 1940, nazis occupied Holland. Rotterdam was burning. Germans moved Jews from the beach areas.

03.56 Beginning of 1941, the Jewish Refugee Committee proposed to send the children to USA. This was voted down because they hoped to get them to Palestine.

04.04 It was known that Germans were killing Jews. They were moved in Sept. 1940 to Lostrecht, another home by the 'youth aliya'. Describes life in the home. Describes the anti-Jewish laws in Holland. They knew that Jews were transported to Westerbor.

05.20 The children in the home went underground. 60 children left in small groups and forged papers. They went by train and were taken in by Dutch families. Dutch hid 20,000 Jews.

- 06.05 He changed hiding places 13 times in one year. Describes life with families he hid out with. The Westerwel group provided new hideouts. He refused to stay with more families because he did not want to endanger them. Yop Westerwel took him with a group to the border of Switzerland but they could not cross. Hid out in a village near Utrecht. Went to Antwerp and got jailed.
- 07.05 In prison he denied that he was a Jew and was sent as a volunteer worker to Cologne. Worked for a peasant on a large farm. Describes life. Escaped and went back to Rotterdam, worked for a peasant. Yop Westerwel helped him cross into Belgium. Worked for engineer on fortification in Normandie. Left for south of France.
- 08.01 Describes role of women in families who hid Jews.
- 08.13 Describes the workings of the Westerwel group and their leadership. Jan. 1943 Shu Shu was arrested and committed suicide. Kurt Reilinger took over, also Ernst Hirsch, called 'Willie'.
- 08.31 Met Kurt Reilinger in Paris. Went to Bordeaux with forged German transit papers. Describes life as volunteer worker.
- 09.16 Got called to Toulouse and joined the Jewish chapter of the Resistance. A group of them marched for 3 days and crossed into Spain in April, 1944. They were helped by Dutch and American embassies and the Joint took care of their needs. They reached Barcelona and remained there for 5 months.
- 10.00 Describes life in Barcelona. Poverty, war invalids and the antifascist sentiments of most of the people. Describes Blue Brigade who were fascists and organized anti-Jewish actions.

The Spaniards helped save Jews. They rescued a large group from Bergen Belsen and brought them to Spain. They took in refugees and helped get visas to Palestine.

In Nov. 1944 he and a group went on a small Portuguese boat, 'Guinee', which they took from Cadiz and went to Haifa. He went to kibbutz Galed and then to the Haganah.