

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

BETTI FRANK

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Sylvia Brockmon  
Date: March 3, 1991

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BF - Betti Frank<sup>1</sup> [interviewee]  
SB - Sylvia Brockmon [interviewer]  
Date: March 3, 1991

*Tape one, side one:*

SB: Please tell me where you were born, and when, and a little about your family.

BF: I was born in Zutphen, Holland, a small place. There were only about 20,000 inhabitants. And there was a Jewish *kehillah* from about 600 people, 150 families. It was a very active *kehillah*, and I got a rich, real Jewish education. And see, the whole life was around the synagogue and around the Jewish festivals. My parents had a butcher shop, and all kinds of business related to sheep, the wool of the sheep, and they made what do you call it for the violins, this, eh...

SB: The bows? The strings? Strings.

BF: The bows, the strings from the bows.

SB: For the violins.

BF: They were made from sheep, eh...

SB: Guts.

BF: Guts. They had also a business in this. And we were only a small family, two children. When I was small my grandmother lived with us, a very, have, remember her very good. She was always with me together. My mother was always in the business and I was with my grandmother. And it was a nice, a nice, nothing, everything was all right. Nothing was, missing.

SB: And what was your life like before the German invasion. Do you remember the exact time of the German invasion; then how your life changed?

BF: Oh yes, it was the 10th of May, 1940. I was yet at school, at high school. My brother finished already high school. And I think he had already the call-up for the army, for the Dutch army. In '39 he was 19 years, 18? And that, he, he did not, did not get in the army before, the, the Germans came in before. So our place, our little town, little city, was before the, the rivers.

SB: Yes.

BF: In Holland they, this part of Holland, behind the rivers they did not defend. So the Germans already at four o'clock in the morning we heard the Germans coming in with motorcycles and they went straight to the places where the, the real strategic places, to the bridge, where the, they, they managed to blow up the bridge. The Dutch blew up the bridge, and they got behind the bridge. So there was no bridge, just, this, our, our town was the first front line. So it was really fighting. It was very frightening. We were, we all got down in the lower floor. We lay on the floors. It only took one day until it was finished.

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<sup>1</sup>née Koppel.

SB: Tell me, how was your relationship with the non-Jews in the town, and...

BF: Oh, it was very good. I really, I grew up between non-Jews. It was, there, there were, I, we went to school in a non-Jewish school, and so in, mostly the Jewish children went to spe-, to the special school where, it was a good school, and Jews got the children in, in this school. So in our, in my class, I think we were six or seven Jewish children. It was very special. I have really some photographs from the whole classroom. And the Jewish children are in the middle together [chuckles].

SB: All together.

BF: Yes.

SB: Uh huh. How did the Dutch people react to the invasion by the Germans, and how did they react in relation to the Jews?

BF: In the beginning, the Germans did nothing to the Jews. They did as if they, nothing would happen to the Dutch people and they, they made themselves nice people, nothing would happen. So we were, of course we were very afraid and before the Germans came, we had all the, the, the emigrants, people who fled from Germany, the Jewish people, and because we were a town near the border. So I remember very good from when I was a small child from '35, '36, German, the Jews came over the border, and my parents helped them, my mother helped them a lot always. But also the Dutch did not let the German Jews stay in Holland. They had to go, to go on, and it was very difficult to get a permit to stay in Holland.

SB: I see.

BF: I remember a family, they were in our town...

SB: Yes?

BF: And they had already a flat, and they worked, but they couldn't get a permit. And my father was, he was born in the same city and his parents and his parents, and he knew everybody. So he went everywhere to get a permit for them. He didn't get it. And one day they had to go, they were ordered across the border...

SB: To where?

BF: To go out! No, this doesn't matter. Go out of Holland.

SB: I see.

BF: So the only thing my father did manage to get for them, that they will bring them to the, the police, that they will bring it to the Belgian border, not to the German border.

SB: I see.

BF: But that's the only thing he could do for them.

SB: I see, so...

BF: And he went with them until they were over the Ger-, over the Belgian border that the Germans wouldn't get them. It was only '38 or '39. This is one of the things I remember very good. People got, they had to go out. They came to our house with their

suitcases, and they were very sad. And they didn't know where to go. And I still remember it.

SB: Well, were the...

BF: It was the Dutch authorities that did not allow them to stay.

SB: And do you, have you any idea how many German Jews were, had come into your town and had to leave...

BF: No.

SB: You don't have any idea about that.

BF: No.

SB: And, tell me, was your family affected at all by the anti-Jewish laws of '38, '39?

BF: Of course, they, I, I was at school. At '40, I was at school yet. I was in the fifth grade or the sixth grade, I don't remember. So, then, then, nothing happened. You could stay at school. But they started from, eh, I don't know exactly all the days they started. One day we could not go. We even had to close the business. And then you have to clo-, you could not go outside. And then you would have to report, to give your bicycles. And then you have to give your gold. And then, they did it step by step. [Dates are questionable, probably meant High School.] That's something, I don't know it by heart how they did it. I managed '4-, until '48, [probably '39] in December '48 [?] I had my matriculation. I could do it, was the last one, last time, and then, but, but then all schools were closed for Jews. So the children who were at schools who had to, they made a small Jewish school in this town, and all the children went to that Jewish school. But I finished already. But I could not, could not continue my studies. I wanted to study. But you could not, could do nothing. And then also housemaids were not allowed [any]more to work with Jews. So, all the Jew, the young girls, I myself too, we went to work with families, to do something, to earn something, or to do something. We...

SB: And, were the Jewish businesses affected?

BF: Yes, they closed.

SB: They closed all the Jewish businesses.

BF: They closed the Jewish business.

SB: And then, when did they begin to round up the Jews in your town?

BF: The worst thing was that they, one day that came ordination, an order, you should, all the Jews must re-gist [register] themselves as Jews. How many Jewish grandparents they have. So, and this was our death, death, eh...

SB: Sentence.

BF: Sentence. And we didn't realize it. You know, I'm, certainly I'm Jew. Oh, I'm proud about it. That so, we, registered ourselves as Jews. And from this registration they took all the Jews.

SB: So when did they begin to round up and take the Jews?

BF: I think it was '41. It was June, '41 we registered.

SB: Yes.

BF: And they started to round up the first *Razzias* [raids] in Amsterdam were I think in February, this Febr-, the, when there was the big strike in Amsterdam. I think it was January, '41...

SB: Yes.

BF: Was the first time they made *Razzia* in Amsterdam. They took boys from the street. And then, the...

SB: They took the, all, any Dutch, or just the Jews?

BF: Jews! Jews. Jews.

SB: They took the Jewish boys...

BF: The Jews.

SB: Boys.

BF: The Jews.

SB: Just off the street.

BF: Then they concentrated also the Jews from certain, you could not go, you had to, you have to be a permit to travel. You could not travel if you wanted to.

SB: Yes.

BF: [unclear]

SB: And what did they do with these boys whom they rounded up?

BF: These boys whom they rounded up, they went straight to Mauthausen. They killed them all.

SB: Killed them all?

BF: Yes.

SB: And then what happened further to...

BF: They killed them all, and they sent back the letters that they were killed, and the people could get their ashes. That they did by purpose, to make panic...

SB: Terror

BF: To make panic terror, yes. And then they [unclear]...

SB: This is the first time I've heard about this. Please talk about that again. You got a letter? I mean, all the...

BF: We did not get it...

SB: Jew, I mean the Jews, the, the parents...

BF: The parents...

SB: Of the Jews...

BF: Whose Jews...

SB: Who, the Jewish boys...

BF: My, my, yes, there was a, my cousin was with this. Some, my, my father said that...

SB: Yes, they were rounded up, sent to Mauthausen...

BF: Yes...

SB: And then they, you got, you all got the letters...  
BF: Got back a death sentence, yes, a death...  
SB: The letters that they had been burned...  
BF: Yes...  
SB: And these are the ashes.  
BF: Yes.  
SB: Mmm. Mmm. Mmm. And then, what happened to your family after that?  
BF: My family's home, the business was closed.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: But you had to make a living.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: You had a little bit money, but you could not make a living.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: So, the business, people, like, they, like here made the fun, they make business without a shop, yes? And somebody, somebody, how do you call in English?  
SB: Hired him?  
BF: No, somebody told, to put it, my father...  
SB: Oh, they informed.  
BF: Informed.  
SB: They informed on you that...  
BF: That my father did business...  
SB: Uh huh.  
BF: And there were more people made business together. So...  
SB: And the informers were Dutch people, or Jews?  
BF: Dutch people.  
SB: Dutch people who informed that...  
BF: Dutch, but they were Nazis. They were Dutch Nazis. [unclear].  
SB: They were collaborators with the Nazis.  
BF: Collaborators, yes.  
SB: Ah, and they informed...  
BF: We knew, in our street there were, I know on our street there were several people. They were our neighbors.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: And there, there was people who were real friends from my father, who grew up with him. And then, I know two, two families who got collaborators. And they, one lived there, and one lived there. They saw all, they could see right our door and our house was happening.  
SB: So what, they informed on them, and then what happened? The, eh...  
BF: And then, they called my father to the, to the,...  
SB: Ges-...

BF: To the...  
SB: Gestapo?  
BF: No, that was not Gestapo. It was the Dutch police.  
SB: I see. Uh huh.  
BF: The Dutch police, and, but there was a collaborator who was the, the officers there.  
SB: I see.  
BF: The good people.  
SB: Uh huh.  
BF: And, eh, [unclear]...  
SB: You went to the, he, they called him to the police station?  
BF: They called to the police station for a testimony. And he never came back.  
SB: He never came back.  
BF: No.  
SB: And then what...  
BF: They took him to the prison in, in Arnheim, and then they took him to a concentration camp in Holland. And they sent him to Ausch-, to Mauthausen. And from Mauthausen we got this letter that he was killed on a, when he tried to fled away, to flee.  
SB: And you got a letter from the...  
BF: Yes, yes.  
SB: That he tried to flee?  
BF: Yes, "*Auf der Flucht erschossen*" [shot while fleeing].  
SB: And, of course. And then they shot him. This is what they say.  
BF: Yeah, I know, I mean, you can read in *Lochamei Haghetaot* [The Ghetto Fighters House] what happened in Mauthausen.  
SB: Yes. Yes. Then what happened to you and the rest of your family?  
BF: So, we stayed, my mother and my brother and I. And my brother was in, in this time he was a Palestine pioneer, pioneer. He went to the, to the, to a farmer to learn the trade.  
SB: Oh.  
BF: He wanted to go to Palestine.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: But he could not study. Also, he could not study anymore, so, he was Zionist and he was, work with a farmer. Then they started to round up the Jew, the young, the younger boys. They always thought that only the younger, the young boys, the young men they will, they didn't, nobody thought they will take the whole families. They will take the young, the men, and the younger boys to a working camp, to work, and, they started to round them up. And then, mostly, in the night--he didn't sleep at home any more--so the younger men they stayed out of, out of the house. So a few times he managed, they did not, get him. And my mother and I stayed at home. And then, then, a few, a time he,



he was in hiding and then it was just very difficult for him there. I, I, after the war, I spoke to people he was with them. They, he could not sit in the house the whole day. He, it was impossible for him. He could not do it. He had to stay in the house in a small room. He could not do it. So then he came back and I want, we were looking for a place to hide, all of us. But we did not find. And in the meantime they came to our house. Already before most of the, a lot of families were already taken, but we stayed because my father was not, was not at home. They took always the families from the man, they took to work camps. But my father was not at home, so they did not take us. So, but then, at last they took all the, all the families, so they came also to our home. There came two Dutch police officers, no Nazis.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: And they, I knew the people. I grew up with them. They, they were friends of my father, and they came to our house and my mother fainted. We were at home. My mother fainted. On the floor. And it was, it was theater. She did by purpose. I didn't, I...

SB: Oh.

BF: Until today I didn't, don't understand how they did it. And they said to my aunt, "Can't take her. She is ill. [unclear] nothing [unclear]. We will take her to, we will make a small Jewish hospital near the synagogue. There is a big house from the Jews, *kehillah*, and all the sick people will stay there. And you must go with us." You know, my brother and I must go. And then I said, "But if there is a hospital," I says, "I am a nurse there. They need people to work there. How can there be left sick people without nursing? Without younger peo-?" He said, "I don't know. You are not on the list." Maybe, so, I am not on the list. "I am on the list," I told him. I did not know anything about it. And so one of, of the officers stayed with us, and the other one went to the, to the office. And after a time he came back, "Yeah, you are on the list." I, until today I don't know who put me on it, if it was true or not, I don't know. I never asked. I don't remember also the name of this person. I don't know. My brother had to go. They took my brother, and they sent him to Westerbork. And then he stayed, and my brother stayed in Westerbork--this was January--one month. And he was together with the *hechalutz*...

SB: Yes.

BF: With the people who were in Westerbork, you know, there was this group in Westerbork...

SB: Yeah.

BF: Who worked in the fields, and a few people of them then managed to, to get out, to escape. But he, he was sent to Auschwitz.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: And they killed him there.

SB: So what finally happened to you and your mother?

BF: And my mother and I, they took us from the house...

SB: Yes.

BF: And this is one of the things I always remember then, to go out of, of the, of your house, and you have to only take your beds with you, and some *Leinen* [linen], and some personal things. And they brought us to this, this was at the house from the *kehillah*...

SB: Yes.

BF: It was, there was a big, a big festival hall and there were, there was the Jewish school was there and the *mikveh* was there, and all the things, you know, what has a *kehillah*.

SB: Sure.

BF: And from this big ballroom they made a big hospital. There was a kitchen, so we worked in the kitchen. We slept, I don't know where we slept someplace...

SB: And all the Jews were gathered into this...

BF: No, they were only the Jews who, the older people, I think there were about 100.

SB: 100 Jewish people were put into...

BF: Yeah--old people, really.

SB: I see.

BF: There were *really* sick people, and there were people like my mother. And my mother got awfully sad. "I did it by purpose. I did it, it's only the one, maybe it will help." And my mother was really, when she was young, she was a nurse for older people. She was, then she was 50 only, or, was it 52? And she was one of the few people who really knew how to nurse the older people. So, but she could not dress. She went around with her nightgown, with a, with a...

SB: 'Cause she was supposed to be sick.

BF: She was supposed to be sick. In order to take care nobody would come from the Germans, you see.

SB: So then what happened? How long were you...

BF: So we stayed in this house until April, the 7th of April. Then the, there came and a new, ord-, how do you call it in English?

SB: New order?

BF: Order, that all the people from the province, province [unclear], people who did not live in Amsterdam...

SB: Yes.

BF: We should go to Vught,<sup>2</sup> this concentration camp.

SB: So you all...

BF: So we had to go there, and there were a few people who managed to escape. My mother could not get out. We were not allowed from this house. We could, only one

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<sup>2</sup>Vught (German Hertogenbosch) was a transit and punishment camp located at a former police detention center in the southern Netherlands. Set up late in 1942 as a model camp with a theater, schools, library, orchestra and sporting events. The first Dutch Jews arrived on January 16, 1943. Over 12,000 were deported to Westerbork. Conditions were poor; privileged inmates were employed in workshops by Philips. The camp was dismantled on June 2, 1944. (*Dictionary of the Holocaust*, Epstein and Rosen, p. 328.)

hour a day we could get out of the house to shop or something. We weren't allowed to go out. Me, for me, I was also, with the *hechalutz* group. There came somebody for me, and to make false papers that I could, should escape. And I ov-, I gave my photograph, and when they came back then I'd don't do what they go with my mother. I could not, I could not leave.

SB: You could not leave her.

BF: Yeah.

SB: So you...

BF: So we went together to there, to this, to this concentration camp.

SB: In Holland.

BF: In Holland.

SB: And tell us something about your life in that concentration camp in Holland.

BF: In Holland it was a big shock, shock, to, you know, we went there by train, and then, suddenly there were Germans around you. So we were closed in. They stood around you with, with the, with this, with the...

SB: Rifles?

BF: Rifles. And with the dogs. And then they got us in the bus. They drove you to this camp. And I never forget the closing of the gates behind me. I'll never forget this. I'll never forget this. Then now, what did I do? Why did I do that and not escape? But it was too late for me. I should have, has, have tried to get out together with my mother. I didn't do it.

SB: You were not the only one.

BF: Mmm.

SB: When you have, when you have such might around you, some, with dogs and Germans and guns...

BF: No, before. We were in this, in this, near the synagogue. We could get out. But there was also a very, *lachatz*, how do you call it?

SB: Pressure.

BF: Pressure on you, if, you don't know what would happen to the other people if you get out.

SB: Exactly. Exactly.

BF: And the people spoke about it. And they knew. They, especially me. They knew I was a, I was one of the youngest of the nurses, two or three. They, especial, on our, on nurses they took care we shouldn't get out. And we were afraid--get out...

SB: Because there would be mass punishment...

BF: Yes, yes...

SB: If you did get out. Well, then, this is what happened to a lot...

BF: My, my, my, eh, this is a, *pachat* [fear]...

SB: Terror, or, your fear...

BF: Terror or fear for my mother. Why, I, I could get out. My mother would stay. My mother said, "Go. Go. Go." She wanted me to go.

SB: And so, you went into...

BF: And...

SB: This concentration camp.

BF: This concentration camp.

SB: And then tell us...

BF: And then...

SB: Tell us about your life in the concentration camp.

BF: This, in the beginning, all the, they separated men and women, of course. And then, you got in a, and this was a big barrack. You got your, there were, Vught was [chuckles], was a *Luxus* [luxurious] concentration camp. What we saw afterwards, this was, Vught was nothing. And you, there was a barrack and there was, you came in and there were toilets, open toilets, three, four, six on a wall. And there was a washing room also. In the middle was, from the tub, that we, we, with, with water tapes [taps]. And then there was a big room. There were some wooden tables with...

SB: Chairs?

BF: No, not chairs.

SB: Benches.

BF: Benches. And then there was a big room. There were three, three...

SB: Three levels.

BF: Levels of...

SB: Of beds.

BF: Beds.

SB: Barracks.

BF: Around near the other there was only a small, small corridor between them to get around. So I was young, so I was on the top. On the top you had some, you could with the, with their hand you could reach the...

SB: Light?

BF: The...

SB: The top of the...

BF: Top, to the, the top of the roof.

SB: Yes.

BF: So it was very, disgracing. The day started, with the terror, with the, with the, German discipline. You have to, in the morning, at six we had to, to be on this *appell*...

SB: On the roll call.

BF: On the roll call. In the evening the roll call. And you got very bad food. Very, the soup, it was only water with, with here and there a little potato, a little--it was very bad.

SB: And what kind of work did you do there?

BF: In the beginning nobody worked. And then it was all turmoil. They knew they took the people, only to wait for the next transport. There was no meaning to keep them at work.

SB: I see.

BF: The worst thing was for the children. And there was the, they separated the children from the mothers. And they made a big children's camp, separated. And all the children got sick there. They got terrible sick. There are some reports. You can get it in, in the *Lohamei Haghetat*, you can see it. There was diphtheria. The children died like flies. It was awful.

SB: And then what did they do? They just...

BF: There was no food and no medical, and, nothing.

SB: And then...

BF: And then we, and then we were in these barracks and then there was also a group of the, of the Jews, Zionist *chalutzim* [pioneers]...

SB: Yes?

BF: So, then I went with them. And this barrack was a little bit better. So my mother said, "Shoo. Go there with the younger people." So I went together with them. And my mother, also in this camp, she put, she was a nurse. She had a, a...

SB: A band [armband].

BF: A band with a red cross, and she, she did a lot of good work there, really. And so it went on until the, this was April, May, ah, we had Pesach there, in the camp.

SB: In the camp.

BF: And, but this night of Pesach, they let us stand outside the whole night, and there was this, they stood--we had lice--we had those lice there this time. And so we had to, we stood the whole night naked outside. And we had to give our clothes, to get out of the barracks, to put our clothes. We stood night outside, and then we had to go to, I don't remember yet now what they did. And then we came back in the barracks. They took all our things. There was nothing any more. Our, our...

SB: All your belongings were taken.

BF: All our belongings they took with them. We are, only what we, we, gave to the *entlausen* [delousing] we got this back, and it was, it was. I don't remember exactly, but that was the, that I didn't write it down.

SB: And how long did you stay there?

BF: Oh, this whole, this, and there was always, you, they are always moving you. They never let you be in a certain place. You had to, you were a few days in a, in a bed, and then you had to move to another bed, and to move to another barrack. Always, always moving.

SB: Moving.

BF: Nothing, nothing...

SB: And...

BF: And then my, then they started with this transporting. At first the children and if there's a very old people...

SB: And did you have any idea where they were being transported to?

BF: We did not know, but we didn't believe that either, that they would live.

SB: I see.

BF: We didn't know afterwards the peop-, the, in this Vught there was in the, Vught was a combinative [combination] camp. There was, originally it was a political camp for non-Jews.

SB: Yes.

BF: They brought them from the, from the, from the prisons and from the illegal workers, and communists, they were.

SB: I see, yes.

BF: They were in the middle.

SB: I see.

BF: There were non-Jews. Afterwards we had contact with these non-Jews, because we, Philips, and then we started to work with, after they transported the old people and the sick ones and the children to, to the East...

SB: Yes.

BF: They started to make industry there in this camp. And there was a textile industry, and there was a leather industry. And a Philips started also. And, I believed the Philips. Everybody said, "No, you shouldn't go to work for Philips. Then they will take you to Germany." I don't know why I believed in Philips. So, I got myself, I was free, and you had to do an examination. If you had your fingers, you were in good working, and if you had good eyes. And I passed the examination. I was a young girl. And always I said when there was some transport, always this Philips *Kommando* stayed apart. So, I'm, I'm believed in Philips. So I, I, but this was already after my mother went away. My mother was sent away with the last of the big children transport. There was a big children, they took all the children and then my mother was on the, she was not so old, but she was not young either, and she had to go too. And then I said, "I'll go with you, then." "No. You don't go with me. You stay here." She didn't let me go. "You stay here." And my, I went with her until the, until the gates from the, there was, there were women's camp...

SB: Yes.

BF: And they had to go out of the women's camp to go the big *Appellplatz* where they--I see her go. She had a dark, dark hat and a dark mantle, a dark coat. I say, "I go with you! I go with you!" And she put me and she throw me back, "You stay here. You will, don't go. Where I go there will be God also." That was her word. That was her word. [weepy voice]

SB: So you never saw her again.

BF: No, this was the end.

SB: And then you went to work at Philips.

BF: And then they were, they got these things.

SB: So tell me then, you were wor-, tell me about your work at Philips. And then what happened?

BF: At Philips then, gradually all the people who didn't work for Philips, all these other *Kommandos*, they were liquidated. They were sent to the East to go to, to, to, it was one big transport. It was always moving. They were always transport. You never knew what would happen. You never, you was not, never sure if you got up in the morning where you will be in the evening or where you will, you never know. That's one of the things the most, and you can't tell that, that it's only, I always tell if you, if you tell what the Germans did, these are not the big things, the big things, but every day, the every minute, the everyday things, they, they did with you.

SB: They did the psychological things...

BF: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SB: To make you suffer and to make you always in fear.

BF: And I want, if some people say there's another Germany and they should speak with Germans and somebody, Germans connect. I can't give them a hand. I never give anything to German. They say, "Come give him hand." And I have to think that one minute of, of what they did, and then it's enough.

SB: That's true.

BF: I can't think about it.

SB: I agree.

BF: So they...

SB: So then you worked at Philips...

BF: So the, the last, at least, at last only the Philips group stayed. This was about 400 me-, women, and 100 men. So we lived in the compound of the women. They lived, and then there were also already in this women compound non-Jewish women were there also. They were illegal workers and communists and all these things. And, though, we had a, we, we slept in it...

SB: There were Jewish women separated from the others?

BF: Separated. Separated.

SB: Separated from the others.

*Tape one, side two:*

BF: ...back...

SB: I see.

BF: So you could go to them, but, it really was not allowed so you had to take care that there was no German in the neighborhood. There was all the, this was a kind of, we had a kind of system for warning system in the camp.

SB: I see.

BF: You, always [unclear] people stood on the outlook [lookout], and when there came a German, you had to, they said, "*Deutsche*." So you know that you have to take care, or, that kind of, other words when you, you did all kinds of things...

SB: I see. So then you said that they brought in others...

BF: [unclear]

SB: In Philips there were non-Jewish workers. And how long...

BF: [unclear]

SB: Did this continue?

BF: And, so you worked at Philips you had contact with non-Jews, and also with the men.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: At first we worked at the Bent, Radio Bent. We made radios. And then I got from this radio, these lamps, these radio lamps. This was a special department, and of course I had very good eyes. I was very, eh, handy, so I got there to where the--this was a special *Abteilung* [department] and on this, they kept us there in Vught. And they said we were *siegeswichtig* [important for victory]. One time Himmler came. I saw Himmler. [chuckles]

SB: Great honor, wasn't it?

BF: That *Schmuck*.

SB: Yes.

BF: And they [unclear]. They wanted to, to make Vught a special concentration camp, "show" concentration camps. To let eh, see to the Red Cross and to the rest of of the world the world, how the Germans, it was a special [unclear].

SB: How well you were treated by the Germans.

BF: How well we were treated?

SB: Yes.

BF: So they came to all the camps. The same story as they did in Theresienstadt. And once they came with this Himmler beast, came to visit us. And then he asked that, he saw that we worked with this, with a special, eh, that's what your husband does...

SB: Welding?

BF: Welding, but, these small things. This is a very special work.

SB: Yes.



BF: And they said that they, they, the, the chil-, the girls, you must take care of them that their, their hands will not suffer. They should not, nothing, not do other work. And they should li-, lie in the sun when, when it's sun day. And they should be healthy, because...

SB: Oh, I see. So you worked there until...

BF: So that, we worked until, June '44. But in the meantime, there was, again, the Wehrmacht wanted to have us for their *Kriegseinsatz* [war workers]. They wanted us to work, *Krieg* [war] work. There was always a certain amount of clash between the S.S. and the Wehrmacht. The S.S. wanted to, Eichmann wanted to, Hitler [unclear] to, to send us to Auschwitz. And the, other Germans they were part of the, of the German, administration or what you call it. They wanted to, to use this, the work-power of the Jews, and to keep us there. So, in the meantime, once, they sent us twice away to, to send us away to, to Westerbork or to Auschwitz. And twice the Philips people got us back.

SB: Hmm!

BF: Once, even the...

SB: You were already taken there?

BF: Yes! We were already outs-, we were, once we were on the, on the *Appellplatz* already without clothes and with, to, to, to be sent away. And then they came *zurück* [back]. And the second time the men, 100 men, were already in Au-, in, they sent the men to Westerbork.

SB: Yes?

BF: And the women stayed. And the men came back.

SB: They brought them back.

BF: Brought them back.

SB: So, so what finally happened?

BF: And the third time...

SB: Yes?

BF: They tell always, the second time, there was this *Kommandant*...

SB: Yes?

BF: The, somebody from the Philips direction got a permit from Berlin to keep us there. But the *Kommandant* had to sign it. But they did not find him. So they found him in some brothel in the town. They, but they got him out. He got a shikel [unclear] and he signed, there they took us back.

SB: I see.

BF: That's why the, why, they could not find him. That's why the men were already sent to Westerbork and we stayed there.

SB: I see. So you came back.

BF: We came back.

SB: So you came back. And you continued working until when?

BF: Until the third time, this was in June '44...

SB: Yes?

BF: Then they did in mi-, in the middle of the night.

SB: They...

BF: And the people, Philips didn't know. They did not know. They, they, they managed to send us away.

SB: And you went, where did you go from there?

BF: And then we, we didn't go to Westerbork. Westerbork was the, was the big camp near Holland for many people.

SB: Yes. Yes.

BF: They sent us right away to Auschwitz. And I, I saw it, and, I, I stood in, in, in the, in, the freight cars.

SB: Yes?

BF: And I knew the geography of Holland. So I knew that they went through my hometown. And we stood there a few hours on the, on the...

SB: On the platform.

BF: On the platform. And I threw out a letter.

SB: You did.

BF: They found it, yes. They gave it to my, to my neighbors. They found it. They [unclear] it.

SB: I see.

BF: And then I said, "Now, if you go this, this track, we go straight to Germany. If we go that track, we go to Westerbork." And we got this track to Germany. I said, "We go to Germany." And the people, "No! No! We're going to Westerbork." And we got straight to Germany. I said, "I know the track." I was...

SB: But you already knew about Auschwitz? You had heard...

BF: Then, this time, we knew about Auschwitz. In the meantime we had contact with the non-Jewish prisoners. And there were a lot of people who had, had been in Germany and the non-Jewish prisoners they sent back and forth from one concentration camp to another. They were prisoners. They were not sent to death--which, they died too, of course, from illness, and all kinds of things. But they were not sent to the gas. And the people who were sentenced to death, they shot them. But the people who were prisoners, they were sent back and forth. So there were people who were already in Dachau and Buchenwald, and they told us, "You stay here. All things you can do to stay here, and when they will send you to Poland, Auschwitz, finished." They told us about it.

SB: I see. So...

BF: The people did not believe. People did not believe.

SB: People didn't believe.

BF: People did not believe. They did not believe. So, oh, sometimes there were people...

SB: What was their thinking, that they didn't believe that they would...

BF: I don't know.

SB: They couldn't believe that people could be so inhuman as to...

BF: Yes, you could not, you could not believe it. I, I know, we came to, we were four days on the road...

SB: Yes.

BF: And it was a, it was a big train. And it was so big. We were about 500 people. I think they got us to another train in the meantime. We always standing a lot of time or, or, on the place where, how do you call it?

SB: On the platform.

BF: Platform, and, through Germany and the western [unclear] in between. And then we, in the meantime there were people from our transport. One time we stood outside. We could stand, we were allowed to go a little bit outside to our, our, and then somebody, there was one doctor, was, he wrote, he wrote a piece, a doctor, he came through to the woman. He said, "You're saying, always in Auschwitz you are Philips *Facharbeiter*. There is no doctor. There is no nurse. There is no teacher. You are--Philips *Facharbeiter*."

SB: [unclear] working.

BF: "All Philips *Facharbeiters* [skilled worker]." This is what, what the Philips director told me. They will try to get us out. Philips *Facharbeiter*. Philips *Facharbeiter*. And there was one woman from, in, in the Philips group that was a group they were originally working at Velid, Philips. This is a whole story in itself. It's too long to tell it. And they were real Philips employees. And one of the women was a engineer. She was originally from Germany. She was so proud and she worked formerly at *Telefunken*. And I think they had some innovation on her name. So, so, she was also with us. She was originally German. So we got to Auschwitz and after a few days in Auschwitz, this whole story how we got to Auschwitz and what happened, there, that...

SB: How did you get...

BF: [unclear].

SB: Well tell us, how did you get to Auschwitz?

BF: On this train...

SB: Yes.

BF: And when we, the last track of Auschwitz there were near the tracks there were all kind of people from the whole of Europe working, telling us, a Frenchman and, not Jewish people who they took workers. And they shouted, "*Invasion, invasion*." It was the 6th, 6th of June, '44, D-day.

SB: I see. Yes. Yes. Yes.

BF: The 2nd of June they took us away and we arrived in Auschwitz the 6th. So the last track before Auschwitz, these last before Beuthen, the last 50 km. they were shouting. You know, "*Invasion, invasion*." And as if that were to help us. We're going to Auschwitz. We knew already we'd go to Auschwitz. So, we, and, and I had a whole part,

almost the whole trip, the whole, I stood near, near a, a little, it was a window, it was not the window, a little opening.

SB: An opening in the train.

BF: Yeah. And I knew always where we, I looked where, where are we, and how do we go, and, and then I saw we go to this direction, to Auschwitz. And then, one moment we stood still, and we saw, we saw a big camp, big, big camp. And behind it, at the back of the camp we saw big fires. Big fires. Big, big, eh...

SB: Smoke. Chimneys with smoke.

BF: Chimneys with fires. Then they said, "Look, they have, heavy industry here." I said, "Are you crazy? You know what it is?" It, it was--in Vught there was also a crematorium. They did not murder. They did also murder in Vught. But people were dying and people were shot dead, and they burned their bodies in the crematorium. So in Vught there was a big pile. Now sometimes there was also smoke and this, this, this smell. In Vught they always said, the only, only, the only, no how, how, the very fit [?] the only, how do we get out here, only through the pipe. You can't get out.

SB: Only escape, yeah.

BF: So I said, "Are you crazy?" And I said, "That's a crematoria!" [unclear] They, they tore me down from my [unclear] little, little [unclear]. "You are always pessimistic. What do you say? We will work here." On this moment they didn't believe.

SB: Mmm.

BF: They did not believe.

SB: So you arrived in Auschwitz.

BF: We arrived in Auschwitz, we [unclear]...

SB: And what happened on your arrival?

BF: And we got in this, in the, on this [unclear]. You heard it already from people, no?

SB: Yeah, but I want to hear it from you. Tell me about what happened to you as you experienced.

BF: And we were without, we had only *schmatas* on us. In Vught, the last months in Vught we had these striped dresses, but they were good dresses. They were warm and they were good, they were new. And we had shoes and we had all, we had, we don't get new, all these things. We had some things from yourself, not much, but you had a jacket, I think. And, so, but, when we got to, when they sent us to Auschwitz, they took all the good things they took away from us. I see, they brought us a big heap of old clothes, so you're, and the old wooden, wooden, broken shoes. And *tachtunim* [shroud], torn *tachtunim*...

SB: Yes.

BF: Torn, torn, panties.

SB: Yes.

BF: Panties, is it?

SB: Underpants, yes.

BF: Underpants. And that's what we had. We had nothing. So we went, everybody started to dress, and a little bit bigger so she had a little bit, textile, and so we had nothing. Really nothing. We got anything, what, a piece of bread, we got? I don't know, but we didn't eat too much [unclear]. So we arrived in this, and we saw all these, these people, and these, really, you see some film, sometimes films.

SB: But I want to know your reaction.

BF: You see, all...

SB: Talk how you...

BF: There were a lot of people on this train. They will show these people. For us it was nothing new. Then we came from Vught. With stripes, the men in stripes.

SB: Yes.

BF: Shoots, and the Germans. We were used to it already. But really, we were afraid what will happen. So they got us out, and not so, not so nice, what, the shouting and, and, and...

SB: Beating?

BF: Beating. And then they started to shout, *Kein Gepäck abnehmen*. "Don't take the luggage." And we started to laugh. We didn't have any *Gepäck*! *Sondertransport*, the special transport, that were we. So we didn't know what will happen. We were very afraid. And we were already, we were already used to it. You have to stand five, five, five. Then we stand five, five, five. Oh, you, you took where you will, you're together with your friends. And it's, very, very afraid, very afraid. Maybe shall be separated from the men. And you saw this was, it was dark, and there was this fire from the, from the, behind you, and the smell, and it was really like you, you thought this is the end. This is the end. You did not know what will happen to you. It was shock. Really shock. Really shock. And then they started to bring us to the, in Auschwitz, I, if you said Auschwitz, I see only mud. Brown mud. If you see sometimes a film from Auschwitz, there were some...

SB: Just all mud.

BF: It's all mud. But sometimes you see Auschwitz with green and with grass. There was no grass. It was all mud. It was nothing. And then they brought us to here this big, big barbed wire everywhere and these big towers. It was really with the, with the...

SB: Lights...

BF: Lights on, and with lights, yeah. You didn't know what will happen to you. So they brought us to this, they brought us in this camp where we were to be, and the worst thing wa-, also, even used to this *aufsayden* [unclear] where we used also, but these were really *Hexen* [witches], you know? These were, some *kittels* [unclear], these, these au-, these women, women S.S., this is awful. And, but the biggest, then they brought us in this camp and they brought us to a building that was a sauna. So you didn't know where are you. We saw a big hall, a very, very shabby, big cement floor, a few, few benches, and,

nothing. Like, like a pig sty, without, without the, and this is, so we were there and we waited, waited. You had to wait and wait and to stand and to wait and to stand. People were very tired after four days and hardly any sleep. And every [everyone] was very thirsty. And then, then I saw *Seuchengefahr*. You know what this *Seu* means *fahr*?

SB: No. No.

BF: It's, it's, eh, the danger of epidemics. *Nicht kein wasser trinken Seuchengefahr*. [fear of epidemics] Not drink water, this, can cause epidemics. The people were so thirsty, so I, I had got somewhere some water. There was a water tap [tap] somewhere. I brought it to a friend, and then came one of these, these...

SB: Women.

BF: This Jewish girl.

SB: The *Kapo*?

BF: The *Kapos*, and she gave me a *patch* [slap] and threw it out of my hands. That was the biggest shock. The Jewish *Kapos*. Then, they were, they were very good dressed. They had this, you, you came from Poland, or Russia?

SB: Russia.

BF: You know these black, black, in Poland they have these black, black, *sinor* [?], you, black, eh, aprons.

SB: Yes. Yes. Yes.

BF: Which [unclear] this.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: You know this? Do you know this?

SB: No, I'm not, I'm not aware, but it's O.-, but, go ahead.

BF: And they had big--they had these big boots they had from, so, this, from...

SB: Leather boots.

BF: Leather boots with, no, leather with sheep skin. You know this?

SB: Oh yes. With, uh huh. The lining was with sheep skin.

BF: You know, there was sheep skin and there was leather. Leather strips on it, you know? [unclear].

SB: Ah, no, I don't, but...

BF: But this was, you know, always in Vught there were also kind of *Kapos*, but they weren't from us. And they only shouted when the, when the Germans were in the neighborhood. When they're not in the neighborhood, nobody, but they, they were so, so awful.

SB: They were just very cruel.

BF: [unclear]. It was very cruel. So we didn't know what happened to us, what will happen. Then they said we should, should undress. And then we stand naked, you stood naked, we stood naked. I was so happy it was June, it was not so awful. And then you want to wait, and then to go to stand in a room. There were showers. We didn't know

are they showers or not showers. We, that we knew all, then they, everybody understand already this stand. And at last there came water and not, not gas. There came water.

SB: Yes.

BF: But you had no soap. You had no, no, no...

SB: No soap, and no...

BF: Nothing. So, and then they came and razed [shaved] off your hair, also for me and from...

SB: From your genitals.

BF: So then we were, and they did it not so...

SB: Gently.

BF: [chuckles] It was awful. And then came in the Germans, between all the naked women. They came to, to look at you. The German officers came to [chuckles]-- this is something, and then you got in another room. Back in this room where you were before, and, but, your old clothes were not any more there.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: They were better than what we got there. Then we got other *shmatas*. [chuckles] Stinky. We don't know what it's, echh. So we had to put on, on it. And so I had, I have these things, and your shoe shoes could hold your shoes.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: Then we got through this mud to a big barrack. And you, you already saw pictures to barracks of Auschwitz, no?

SB: Yes, yeah, I've seen.

BF: So, so we had to get up in this, in this, this...

SB: On a bunk bed.

BF: Bunk beds, six together.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: And we always stayed, what was, we stayed with our friends together. That is what you had to stay. You never left one girl. You naturally. So we were together with our own, own girls. The six, seven, eight girls. We always-, I had one girl I was always together with her. You had a sister. It was, was a friend.

SB: Sure.

BF: Friend for me. So we stayed together. And we together belonged to now to the group. We had these groups that were, for your own kind, so you had always your own kind.

SB: So what happened after you were in the barracks, and what happened the next morning?

BF: In the barracks, in the barracks you tried to, you got in, I think we had no blankets. I don't know. We got a piece of bread with a piece of, a slice of bread with, slice of red, red sausage, with, with, oh, it was only tasted, it was red, but it tasted as, eh, *knoble* [garlic], and [chuckles] and flowers. It wasn't. So we ate something I think, and oh, there

was shouting, and I don't know [chuckles]. It's like how, this is, and these, these *Kapo* girls were shouting. And then we got some brown brown soup, something, I don't know what. We had only one bowl for, it was together everybody got some *schlucks* [swallows].

SB: You mean you got it from your, in just, in the palm of your...

BF: No, in one...

SB: Oh, in one bowl.

BF: Bowl for six people.

SB: I see. So you, and that's, and you have, you showed me the spoon that you...

BF: That was afterwards.

SB: That was afterwards.

BF: Mmm hmm.

SB: So then, so that, what, then, how long...

BF: That was in the morning at I think at 4 o'clock they came in the barrack and they cried, "*Stawać!*" You know what is *stawać*? *Aufstehen*.

SB: Get up.

BF: *Stawać! Stawać!* And shouted you had to get up from your bunks and they started to...

SB: With whips?

BF: To whip you and outside, oh, outside, five, five, five. Stand. *Appell*. Like this. And you have to stand in, you know, you stood together, cold, in the morning, to wait until they say...

SB: Until the roll call, like a roll call.

BF: And hours, I think hours. Then you should go to the WC. And the WC it was something awful. It was like a, like a, a pig sty with...

SB: Holes.

BF: Yeah, with, something like, I mean, a bench, and there were holes. But, but you could not get to it. And it was dirty. People could not do it well and dysentery. They were allowed, I think they said, "One, two, three, four, five, pop." You could not do it! So, that was awful. It was so awful. I don't, I don't know how I managed things. You know, you really don't know how you did many things. And then back to this barrack, and then you, then they brought us to, oh, the whole day you had to go hence and back and hence and back and you had to get people to fetch the, the food, the soup from the kitchen. And it was very heavy. You couldn't hardly, hardly, I don't know how. I think once I went, but it was impossible.

SB: To carry a big, to carry a big pot of soup.

BF: Yeah. Yes, and then, then, you put a little bit soup...

SB: And then did you do any work?

BF: And the whole day, no, no, we didn't any work. And then we were assigned already to go outside.

SB: Yes?



BF: We were, this Vught's group.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: So, after a few days, we went another time to the sauna. I mean, I don't know, the whole time they, they moved us. I really, I really can't, don't remember, the whole day we were really on the move. From here to there. From there to here.  
SB: You didn't tell me about having the tattoo number on your hand.  
BF: Ah yah I did.  
SB: When did they, when did they...  
BF: Yah, the first night.  
SB: The first night.  
BF: The first night. It was also the shock.  
SB: I see.  
BF: Together with the shock.  
SB: I see, the first night.  
BF: [unclear] and after they, they...  
SB: So after the hot showers.  
BF: After the showers. We had to wait another time. Oh, yeah, maybe it was the next day. I don't know.  
SB: Well, but tell me, so what happened? Then they...  
BF: I went this day. So, we didn't understand. What are they doing? And though after the first we saw what was happening. So these were also Jewish girls. They didn't, you had a pot of ink, and the, the, like a pen, and they took your, and they put it. And I saw there was one girl did it nicely. So I wanted to go there. But another one took me [chuckles] [unclear]. And she did it very [unclear]. And then we started to, to spread it out...  
SB: Was it painful?  
BF: It was painful, yeah. To, started to suck it, which was a very big shock too. This really big shock...  
SB: I can imagine.  
BF: No, [unclear] picks, and...  
SB: So then...  
BF: Then they did not, hit little bit from there, oh, ah... [chuckles].  
SB: I see.  
BF: Yeah.  
SB: And then the people from Philips were taken out of the camp?  
BF: And then one day after these days, the people in the, we saw also other people coming in. Once we were also in this washing room, and I saw there was a window. And from the window I could see the, the rampart.  
SB: Yes.

BF: And I saw coming in big transports of, of Hungaries, from Hung-, they were most of them from Hungary in this time.

SB: Yes.

BF: And then I saw the, how they separated the children and from their mothers. And I saw the children go in a little row. And after this time, I, I, until today when I see a row of children, I start to cry. When my children were small, we were, always when we were in the Kindergarten, when they were in a row, and I started to cry. I mean, why do you cry, I mean, I always saw, these children, and all, the small children, they went, and then, what happened? One of these *Kapos* saw I stood there, and she beat me and gave me a beating there. "What are you looking there? You want to go there too?" I always have this...

SB: Picture.

BF: Picture in my eyes.

SB: Yeah. There was, did you ever see Mengele there?

BF: I had seen him, but I don't remember. I don't, but, before, but we, we, I, he has been there when we got in. I don't know. We did not never go on a selection and our whole transport got in the camp together. We had seventeen children with us.

SB: I see.

BF: It was one of the few transports who had children.

SB: And, eh...

BF: And all the, my, I did not know she was my husband's aunt, but the sister of his father was there with her daughters. He, her daughter was a real Philips employee, this aunt. She was already almost 70 years. And I remembered when we were naked and she was already in a bad--she came through.

SB: Ah hah.

BF: She was in the bad, she t-, eh, bad, eh, state. So we put her on the bench and all that I see her, she only is this old, naked woman on this bench. I see her always how she was there, with her daughter, she was.

SB: So, but the children who were with you, were they separated?

BF: No they stayed with us.

SB: They stayed with your group.

BF: And, because that, everybody came in our barrack to see the children. There were no children in Auschwitz!

SB: There were all...

BF: They were the...

SB: They were all...

BF: ...all the children. But what did this *Kapo* do? The children got as a special soup...

SB: Yes.

BF: But they stole it from the children. And then one of the women started to shout, they take it from the children. They beat her up. So, they, because these children, from the seventeen children, nine stayed alive, came through Auschwitz.

SB: And the other...

BF: They did not gas us.

SB: I see.

BF: But they, they said, put us this, this, eh, this, eh, three, eh...

SB: The tattoo number, yes.

BF: Yes. We say this is that we didn't go to gas.

SB: I see.

BF: But another one says this is *Arbeitsatz*. Another one that it's something. I don't know.

SB: But the fact is that you were not sent to the gas chambers so that...

BF: Of our group, no one was...

SB: Because you were Philips workers.

BF: Yes. People died who, who, then, then they started to select us to go out of the camp. One day we stood on the *Appell* [roll call], and then they started, they came, the Germans, officers, I don't know. I never looked them in the eyes. I was always afraid. I was a rather, rather, eh...

SB: You were an attractive young woman.

BF: Attractive young woman.

SB: Sure.

BF: And I had a very good...

SB: Figure.

BF: Good figure.

SB: Sure.

BF: So I always went behind. I was never, never in the first row. I always managed to get in the last row. And I never looked them in the eyes. I don't want to catch their eyes. I didn't want them to catch my eyes.

SB: Of course. That's right.

BF: So I don't know. I remember. I see a officer with a cap and with, with...

SB: With a uniform?

BF: With a whip.

SB: A rifle and a whip.

BF: It, but I don't know. The officers, they had no rifle. They had a revolver and a whip.

SB: Uh huh.

BF: Oh, and all against the ladies.

SB: I see. So what happened then?

BF: And then they started to call, "Frau Doktor Kohn. Frau Doktor Kohn." As we saw Frau Doktor Kohn, this is Philips. We always had our hope Philips will get us out. They will get us out, and then we were, we saw we were a *Sondertransport*, and we knew then people, we met people there and they said, "There are no children here. Everybody goes to the gas." People really, we spoke with people who were there a longer time. And then they brought us again to this sauna place, and you had to sh-...

SB: Make you strip again.

BF: Naked. Undress. And then they started to separate. And everybody out, "How old are you? Where are you? You are healthy." They looked on your body if you did not have any pimples or something. People stood up like this [unclear] and they said, "To the right. To the left. To the right. To the left." And then, I went to the right, and my, my friend, my sister friend, she went to the left. And she said, "Come with me! Come with me!" I said, "No, you come with me." I don't know. I had always a feeling to go where to go. I saw the healthier go up there.

SB: And did she come with you?

BF: And, also I understood good German. I was very, I was a clever girl, so I, I went. So, and I said...

SB: So she came.

BF: She could not. She could not. And then one moment I saw there was a possibility. I said, "Come!" And she was thin. She had not a good figure. And she was thin.

SB: So she did come across.

BF: She came across.

SB: And that saved her life.

BF: Yes. [chuckles]

SB: The others, who went to the left, were...

BF: And, they stayed in Auschwitz. We were 150...

SB: Yes.

BF: They separated the younger ones. And I saw where this Frau Doktor Kohn went.

*Tape two, side one:*

BF: ...I was "K" and she was "V", she was later. Almost on the end of the line, but this was, it was, and then they got us separated, and they go to the showers. And we got better dresses. And the, our, the shoes I have, but we got new, new dresses. New, like a sack, like the *Leinen* [linen]. And I took a long one [chuckles]...

SB: You could cover your...

BF: No, a long one you could cut it off later and make some other thing from that.

SB: Ah, that was clever. [chuckles]

BF: We were already more than a year in a concentration camp, so we had a [unclear] one. And what we, they got us a bandage for menstruation.

SB: Yes?

BF: But we didn't have it. You know? You were [unclear] and it was so double you could make a sack of it.

SB: I see.

BF: And they got all sorts of bandage, no, we are already in Vught. After a few months, nobody had any more any menstruations.

SB: I [unclear].

BF: They don't know why, they don't know. Really they put something in the soup or what was. I think it was psychological.

SB: No, no, I understand that in all the concentration camps the women stopped menstruating because of the psychological tension...

BF: I think [unclear] food [unclear].

SB: Absolutely just stopped menstruating.

BF: So, then, but, they gave it to us. Everybody took it. Everybody knew I can use it for some other thing. And then they, we got a piece of bread, so we put the bread in [chuckles] it.

SB: [chuckling] Yes.

BF: This was our handbag.

SB: That was your handbag. It was a very interesting handbag.

BF: So, and then, then, the other people stayed there. The women with the children and the elderly woman. They stayed, but, and we went in a, after an hour's waiting, we went on a train, and it was a rather clean train. And we, out of Auschwitz. I'll never forget this moment.

SB: And how many days out of...

BF: I never thought...

SB: How long were you...

BF: I would got out of this, this, of, this, this, gate again.

SB: And how long were you in the camp, at Auschwitz?

BF: I think ten days. [unclear]. I don't, I don't remember. I, I...

SB: And where did you go with the train after?

BF: And then the train went to, I saw we went north. We went north, northwest. And then after two days I think we were on this train, we got somewhere out, and we saw a little, a little...

SB: Sign?

BF: [unclear] Reichenbach. And then we got out. We were the most happy we got out of this Auschwitz. We were out of this hell.

SB: How many got out of Auschwitz?

BF: And then we were 150. [figuring] And then when we got to a, to a factory, we saw a big factory, and, and we, they got us over near the factory, and we suddenly saw heaps of material we knew, like they had at Philips.

SB: I see.

BF: And now we got, they got us in, in, like in a big, [unclear] a big hall, and it was straw on the floor. And they brought us plates with soup! Plates! [laughs] I'll never forget it. It was from the factory. And then we got to go to barracks. And the next day we marched to the factory.

SB: And you worked how long in this factory?

BF: In this factory. And the barracks were about a half an hour walking from the factory. And it was a little camp with three or four barracks, with barbed wire around. And next to it was another, another camp. They were Russian, Russian workers. No non-Jews. And we st-, this was June, so we stayed until January in this factory.

SB: Until January.

BF: And we worked six hours, twelve hours, from six to noon, six, or six to, from day of six to six in the night.

SB: Uh huh, and how was the food...

BF: There was a [unclear]...

SB: How was the food there?

BF: The food, in the barracks we got a kind of soup, and a piece of bread, and sometimes little bit jam or little bit margarine or, or, or sausage.

SB: This was lunch...

BF: In the, in the factory we got a bowl of soup in the night.

SB: I see. And then, so, after the factory, what happened? The, that was the end of the war then, or what?

BF: No. It was after Auschwitz was January, the 9-, 8th of January we got bombed out in the factory.

SB: I see.

BF: The factory got bombed.

SB: Yes.

BF: So they brought us to another concentration camp in the nearby, Lanowice, [unclear]. But what was a special thing, in the same, in the same village [unclear], in the same village where they had the, they brought the men from Philips, also from Auschwitz, in another factory in the same village they were. But, and they were in this concentration camp nearby, about one hour walking. And we were in the little camp near the factory. But there were also other men that lived in this, in this concentration camp between working in our factory. So we had contact between our, with the men. My, my friend was married. I don't know how ever he did it. He was there in this concentration camp, in the second one.

SB: And he died?

BF: He died. And we had contact with, I, I said, because I had very good eyes and I made these things, I sat on the, on a special bed--special part of the factory. And nearby all the people came near this, where I sat. I sat between these two other friends. We had control. We had very good eyes. We had to control the work from these things. And we sat between civilians--German civilians--German girls from Berlin [unclear]. And near this, there was the corridor. All the people came in, came on this corridor. And we saw always the men coming in. Until today, I don't know how somebody always said goodbye to me--one of the men. I don't know his name, but how he, did he know, he once called me, there was a place we got to the WC, the water place. We had to ask permission to go out or if you go to WC. And there was a worker table there. The men could come too. And that was the place we changed, could exchange a few words, and that's all. And so, and once he made me a sign. I don't know how you did understand it. I don't know how. So, I got out too, and I met him, and he gave me a paper, a little letter for my friend. Until today I, he gave me a letter somebody who is asking to some, some of the woman [unclear]. It was my friend, it was by chance. And so we had contact. We could, we could, understand him, we sometimes, I don't know how, we, we had a, one of our *Lagerältester* [camp elder] she was a, she came from Holland. It just happened that she was a German woman. She was very clever. And she got it that they brought us coats and warmer clothes. So we had some textile there. We managed something. So we made tooks [?] for the men and all kinds of things. And the, and we sent sometimes little bit bread here and little bit more. So one time I saw him so coming, and I had a, had the letter from my friend with me, all these years here and there and where, and I took it out and put it in somewhere, and I went out, and I got it to him. I came back in the factory hall, "Out. Where did you go? Where did you put it? Where did you put? What did you do?" "Nothing." And the, and my friend was in another hall, but could hear. Another friend sort of in the middle of this hall, and her letter was also in this package I gave. And I looked at her, with my eyes, and she looked at me. And I see, see, she got up, and up to go outside, with another German woman, German *Aufscherin* [inspector] to out, outside. And in the meantime, they, they asked me. And she comes back, and she looks at me, "Shhh." Again. And I look at her.

And I know she got it. She got the, the, they will not find it. She got it away. So I said nothing. I did nothing. I want, I didn't want her to tell...

SB: Sure.

BF: No, what she got it. And then they took me in and beat me up, I think, you've seen Mickey Mouse with all these stars. But I always, I don't know how, how I had the strength. I never was with my head down. Always stayed, I mean. And I don't know why. [unclear] but I mean, I wasn't afraid [unclear] me in. And then they, they...

SB: So this was this woman beat you up, or the...

BF: The woman, the *Aufscherin* beat me up, and then they let me stand there. And then, I was a good worker. And there was a civilian, German civilian, the master from the factory, and I saw he went to her and he came to fetch me back to my table. [chuckles]

SB: So, this work continued until when?

BF: This work continued until we got bombed out, and then they brought us to this...

SB: Concentration...

BF: Concentration camp, and then we were there. In the middle of the night we got there, and we didn't see anything. They got us in a barrack, and there were all these people in it, and there were no beds, and I don't know how we managed. And there the Hungarian women were there. And you could not, if you wanted to go outside, you had to do pee pee, but it was very cold, and this time was a high snow, in January in the east of Germany. And so people had the little, if they could manage it, a little pot, [unclear] box, eh, tin, and I saw there a tin and I had to do, and I did not know, I didn't know where I was. I came in the dark in this camp. I mean, you did not know. I was afraid to go outside and poo poo, so I did it in this thing. I, [laughing] it isn't really funny. Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay, *mein eigenes Privat* [my own personal place]! [laughing]

SB: [laughing] Oh dear!

BF: [laughing] If you'd only seen how, I remember I saw in the morning I only saw this long line [unclear].

SB: So then? [laughing].

BF: So in the morning they got us another bag, and they, they got [unclear] these bunks, and then they started a little bit to send to the factory again, but we had to walk to, to walk more than an hour in the snow, and without shoes, like, like, these kind of wooden shoes wooden clogs. And we went, it was rather far away. And, ah, here, I have this. [pause] This is a, this somebody wrote after the w-, eh, is, one of the non-Jewish women wrote this. They were also there. There were non-Jewish women...

SB: Also in this...

BF: Yes.

SB: And they permitted you to mingle?

BF: Yes. Seven months in, in the...

SB: They were in the Dutch concentration...



BF: There were Dutch Jews, Dutch non-Jewish women. Here. This is the, this is the *Appell*. That somebody, they, they, she, I think she met after the war or during the war she did already, somebody knew how to draw.

SB: Yes.

BF: This is the *Appell*, you see?

SB: This was for the roll call, yes.

BF: This is the thing.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: This is here, she, you see?

SB: The soup, yeah, pushing the, the big, bowl of, barrel of soup.

BF: And this, this is the master. *Er war nicht schlecht*. [He was not bad.]

SB: Yeah.

BF: And [unclear] working.

SB: Mmm hmm. [pause] So then that continued...

BF: [unclear]...

SB: Ah, yes, right, the...

BF: These were our shoes. Really like this. Nothing else.

SB: So you walked one hour to the factory...

BF: And the, and then we worked in the factory, and we [unclear], we, we, have to ca-, spiritism that they want to take, started to do this...

SB: Uh huh.

BF: This is awful. Psychological.

SB: Yes.

BF: This is all we made too...

SB: So you worked, you continued working in the factory, and you walked, you walked an hour each way...

BF: Yes. Yes.

SB: And also twelve hours a day?

BF: Twelve hours a day. Really, you wanted to be, it was better to be in the factory than in the concentration camps. They'll always do something with you. They were always afraid to stay in the camp. Better to be inside, too. Inside, I mean, it was, the factory it was warm and kept you out of the rain.

SB: So then, go on, tell me...

BF: And we always got through this village, really through this village.

SB: Is that so?

BF: And they counted, they did not see [unclear] every day, with, with the Germans, with the dogs, with the rifles. And there was bakery on the way. And this smell, I never forget. And the, there's just something special, this non-Jewish woman said, "They waited to have this smell." And we were afraid of this smell, and they opened the doors

and we came by and they would make it open, this smell, we fainted. And they, they liked it. [chuckles] The non-, non-Jews.

SB: The non-Jews liked it.

BF: Yeah.

SB: So, so then, you worked in the factory, in this factory...

BF: Yeah.

SB: And in this concentration camp.

BF: Yeah.

SB: How long were you there?

BF: This, this, another month.

SB: Yes...

BF: Till February. And then there were, then came this *Litzmannstadt* [Łódź]. The, what is *Litzmannstadt*? *Ist gefallen* [surrendered], Limburg, I think. *Litzmannstadt*. Limburg was taken by the Russians.

SB: This, oh, and...

BF: The Limburg, Germany...

SB: Limburg, Germany was taken by the Russians.

BF: This, all the, and then came all this transport. People came marching in the camp, in this concentration camp, from other concentration camps. And this was awful. The death march came.

SB: Yes, and this was, this was in 194-...

BF: Five.

SB: '5, yes.

BF: February.

SB: Yes?

BF: And then one day, we also, we, we got on a march ourselves.

SB: On, onto the death march.

BF: It was out, yes, and they put us on the march. They gave us a piece of bread and a piece of margarine. A little bit sugar. I don't know where they put it. And we--only the women--and the men were in the, the men were in the men's camp...

SB: Yes.

BF: We were in the same camp. We were a little bit further, and then we marched alongside this camp and we saw some of the men put behind barbed wire. But my husband, my friend's husband was not there. He was already ill. Later, he was very ill and he died not long after it. He became sick...

SB: In the camp...

BF: And he died.

SB: He died?

BF: In this camp he died, yes. And they knew already he was very ill then. He was ver-, he could not write any more, and some of the people said he was confused. He did not sp-, you know?

SB: So you began the death march, and did you know where you, where were they...

BF: They were, they always, the, the, this Reichenbach village was a very beautiful village, this is on the, on the east side of the Sudetenland. A very beautiful sight. And we saw always these very beautiful mountains. I thought, we will go over the mountains, and we are free! We will make a, [laughs], a tour, and then we made this tour. We got on the mountains, the...

SB: You really did get on the mountains.

BF: 2,000 high.

SB: Yes.

BF: Yes, in, in the snow, in the, here, [shuffling through papers]. They really made it beautiful [unclear]. You see how beautiful it was.

SB: Yes. Does *Lohamei Haghetat* have this book, or [unclear]

BF: Actually, I made him a copy from this.

SB: Oh, good. So go ahead. So tell me, so you finally got on top of the mountains.

BF: We were, this was the first night, fon-, [unclear] we, we got us high up. It was very difficult too. I don't know how we did it. I don't know. From our group [unclear]...

SB: How long were you marching? Have you any idea?

BF: Four days.

SB: Four days.

BF: Four days.

SB: Did you have any food beside the one piece of bread that they gave...

BF: No, nothing. I, on the, I was, the first day or second day we had to keep the food, and then, no, we did nothing. We, we, snow, snow, we drank the snow.

SB: Uh huh.

BF: And the third day, I had my birthday. This was the birthday, it was the 18th of February we went marching, on 18th, 19th, 20th was my birthday. And I never forget. My friends, we were in the sn-, in the evening they put us in some, some, we were in straw, but it was already dirty from horses.

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: And she had a piece of bread. Oh, I never forget it. She...

SB: Oh my!

BF: Kept a little piece of bread...

SB: Bread for your birthday.

BF: For my birthday [chuckles]. Never forget it. I, and in the morning when we got up we saw we were without dirt [may mean covered with dirt]. And it was, this was awful. They put us in the, in a horse, eh...

SB: In a stable, with the horses.

BF: Stable.

SB: And the dirt from the horses.

BF: Yeah. It was a, and one night we were in al [unclear] stables, and we heard suddenly there were all, all kind of people on the way. All, everyone was, was, was marching.

SB: Yes?

BF: And they were also, not only Jewish. Were non-Jews, and workers from France, France and they're also Russians. And we were, one night we were in the place. And suddenly the Russians started to sing a Russian song.

SB: Oh my.

BF: I'll never forget it. Yeah.

SB: Oh my.

BF: We were in the same place it was too dark. We did not see.

SB: And they began to sing.

BF: To sing. Yeah.

SB: So what, tell me then what...

BF: And the third, then the fourth day we came in Trausenau. It was already over the mountains.

SB: Yes?

BF: This was, Czechoslovakia was this Trausenau, Sudetenland.

SB: Yes?

BF: And they, we got us some factory, or some factory camp. And they put us in. It was full of people. There was, it was terrible. It was [unclear]. I don't know how our group stayed together. I don't know, how did, they kept us together. The Germans kept us in, we were "their Jews", yes?

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: They kept us together. So, we stayed there one day, and then they, we went to a, to the rail station and we got in, in this wagon. See, and this is this [showing her a picture]. In this wagon, here. [unclear] open wagon. And the, and there was coal on the floor. We were all [unclear]. So we got in there...

SB: Yes?

BF: And this all, like, like you see this. We had a bla-, [unclear] blanket. And the, so we went on the train. We went to, through Czechoslovakia in the north. I knew where we go, north, we saw the names of the Dresden stations. We came to Dresden. It was the big bombardment in Dresden.

SB: What was in Dresden?

BF: They, they, the bombardment.  
SB: Yes. Oh, this, Dresden, yes. Yes.  
BF: The, and the train got in, and it got back.  
SB: Uh huh.  
BF: And we saw this whole bombardment. But we didn't get it. I, I don't [chuckles], so we were in it, and we had nothing to eat, nothing. We had nothing. So we had, we had one bowl with, we had, three or four together had one, from, from ceramic, so...  
SB: Yes?  
BF: We took it with us. We will get soup. And we didn't get soup. And we will have to do our, our, eh...  
SB: Your business?  
BF: Our business! So what could we do? You could not let it go, then you would get so dirty for what. So we put it in, everybody on his turn he did it and threw it out! In half an hour there came soup!  
SB: Oh!  
BF: [chuckles]  
SB: So what happened then?  
BF: In the bowl.  
SB: [unclear].  
BF: What could you do? We ate it.  
SB: I'm sure you did. Yes. [chuckles]  
BF: Hehhh!  
SB: So then?  
BF: The things, the things I remember vividly.  
SB: Yes. Yes. How could you forget these things?  
BF: So then we came with this train. Where did we go? [pause] Oh, we, we got to Bergen-Belsen.  
SB: You got to Bergen-Belsen...  
BF: Yes.  
SB: Finally.  
BF: And they did not let us in. Our big [unclear]. We stood two days for Bergen-Belsen. Seled, Celle, they called it Celle this was the train station.  
SB: Yes.  
BF: And they, and then they gave us some bread there. And they did not get us in. I don't know if the Germans decided it. I don't know if we had some good angel who decided not to let us in. And then they brought us to a place it's called Minlenders farm. Porta Westphalika. [Port of Westfalen] It's not far from the Dutch [laughs] border.  
SB: From the Dutch border.  
BF: Where the Wesel?

SB: Yes.

BF: It's in the [unclear], the middle of west Germany, and they put us in a little camp, in a little camp. They, we, we saw it, a [unclear] here. Actually I don't know where this, another group I have this, this pic-, of, this, eh, I have a painting. And the next morning they put us to go to the factory. And it was a factory, we had to work in a factory. It was a factory in the hill, in the mountain. We had, first we had to go up, then we had to go down.

SB: They just dug right into the mountain?

BF: In the mountain.

SB: In...

BF: It was built a factory.

SB: Hmm.

BF: A factory from, from, the, from the, and there we found all the materials, and the chairs, and the machines from Vught, from Holland. We found chairs with our names in it!

SB: My goodness!

BF: Yes. They brought it from. This, they had a purpose, to bring us there.

SB: Yes.

BF: You know, when they took us away.

SB: I see.

BF: This is impossible to think about it. So every day, for a month, every day we had to, it was very difficult. We had to go up the mountain and down. We were already in a very bad shape. So when you got down, we had to do pee pee. You could not hold yourself. And so I could hardly walk. It was very difficult. And in the factory there was nothing. There was no, no, no, it was *hashmal* [electricity]. Yet there was no, there was material, they could, but there was, they did not do anything! So we sat in this factory, and, but we were, it was better to sit inside. It was only the day. [?] Nothing we did. We only talked, and we talked, everybody came with his, recipes what he will eat after the war and what he will get after the war [chuckling]. The non-Jewish women were too with us there. So after a month, after a month took, on the way, then came the front from the, from the Americans came. So they put us again in a train, and they put us to, to Braunschweig, Magdeburg. Back in the train, but and then we came out, we were in a salt mine. There was also kind of camp, and we were in that camp in Germany. And they, they put us already in *Schichen* [shifts], in *Morgen Schicht*, *Abend schicht*...

SB: Oh, the different, eh...

BF: Different, eh...

SB: Shifts.

BF: Shifts.

SB: To work, yes.

BF: So, the one shift went out, and I was in the second one. And suddenly the shift comes back, on the way, to, and then this camp was full of lice. And there was a big, they called it a *Heckenkammer* where they kept the clothes. And they, they, em, what do you call it? *Schich wotan*; no?

SB: They deloused you?

BF: Yes. They ordered us, everybody had to take a bunch of, of, eh...

SB: Clothes?

BF: Clothes with you. And this was full of lice. And we tried to put it down, but they beat us. We had to take it with us. And then, again, in, in the, in the train car, and I mean, we threw it out. It was impossible. There was no place! And then from this time we were full of lice. It was impossible. You could not, you couldn't get rid of it. And then there from this train, we went back and forth between the, the front. Then everyone was shooting and bombarding and we, then, then they got us to Lüneburger Heide. You know where's the Lüneburger Heide?

SB: No.

BF: In the north of Germany, Bürger Heide, you know where is the Lüneburger Heide? You know where is Heide?

SB: No.

BF: You don't know where it is? It's heath. I don't know what it is. It's very dry, and this was, little flowers...

SB: Yes?

BF: Heide, but you don't, never heard about it, "Aufder Lüneburger Heide", there's a song, of it.

SB: You mean Heidelberg flowers?

BF: May [unclear], no.

SB: No.

BF: Heide, Lüneburger Heide. You can find it in the, on the map.

SB: And what...

BF: And then, we stood there, we did, we, on the tracks. There was no place to go. We stayed there about a fortnight. And there was nothing to eat. One day they gave us some uncooked macaroni. And we went to the fields. We pulled out onions and, and...

SB: Uh huh.

BF: The bulb, or, like these things.

SB: Yes.

BF: It was very awful. And then one day they, again put us in the car and went, brought us to Hamburg, another camp.

SB: Uh huh.

BF: A small camp. There we, they put us, we were in very bad shape. Most people were very ill and full of lice. And they beat us. And they, when we got in, in the

barracks, they beat us, and it was awful. There was nothing to eat. And then we had to dig, to dig, with...

SB: Ditches.

BF: Trenches. Ditches. In the, the, and you're out in the fighting, the front. And this happened about a fortnight I think, and then suddenly they call, again call to the trains, and then we saw they brought us to the trains and we thought, no, it's finished. They will shoot us now. We did not believe anything. And one could never, they bring us to, to, to Denmark. And we don't believe it! And then we came to these trains and we saw these also freight trains, but only 40 in a wagon, and straw on the floor. But most of them were already very ill. And then what I told you, they brought us to the Du-, to the Danish border.

SB: So they brought you...

BF: Brought us...

SB: To the Danish border, for what reason, though? You, eh...

BF: To give us to the, to, to bring us out. To change us.

SB: But...

BF: They were from the Red Cross, from Folke Bernadotte.

SB: Yes, but you said that was an exchange for...

BF: Yes.

SB: Well, tell us about this here.

BF: But I don't know the exact, the exact, truth. I don't know. They told us. They change you for trucks.

SB: I see. They exchanged...

BF: But I don't know the exact facts, if it really was our transport, but they, there were, I don't know how many people. I could look it up in a documentary may be there's written somewhere...

SB: But if...

BF: How many people they exchanged, the Folke Bernadotte. Or he got us free from the Germans as a humanitarian, eh, da-, eh...

SB: But the Red Cross told you that you were exchanged for trucks.

BF: The Red Cross did not tell us anything. They, the...

SB: But who told you...

BF: The German in the car. The German, the German guard told us.

SB: Oh, I see. The German guard in the train...

BF: In the train.

SB: Told you that you were being exchanged...

BF: Exchanged.

SB: For trucks.

BF: Yeah.

SB: For the Germans.



BF: And they will bring us to the Danish border and Hitler was dead, and that the war was finished and--but we didn't believe it!

SB: I see.

BF: Until we got there.

SB: I see. So then you were brought to Denmark.

BF: To Denmark.

SB: And you stayed there how long?

BF: And from Denmark, in Denmark we were only one day until we, they got us to Sweden...

SB: Yes.

BF: To Malmö.

SB: Yes. Yes.

BF: And in Sweden we, we, they put us in quarantine, and then they were, most people were very sick.

SB: I see.

BF: And they got this examination, everybody. And everybody, they, people were taken to hospitals, all kind of illnesses. And there was a small group, I was with them. We were only very thin and exhausted, but we were not ill. So we stayed a small group. And then they brought us to a holiday camp near Göteborg. And they, all the sick people were all cared for in hospital, really cared for. A lot of people died.

SB: They did.

BF: Yes, a lot of people died. And then we stayed in this holiday camp also six week.

SB: Yes.

BF: And then we did not know where we can go back to Holland. And then they, this Philips factory management asked if, if there's a group of girls who want to work in Sweden a few months. And this, so I did it too!

SB: So you worked there in Sweden for a few months.

BF: Yes. Yes.

SB: Then what happened? You went back to Holland?

BF: And then we went, I went. In the meantime I got letters from friends...

SB: Yes?

BF: That a brother of my mother survived in Holland, and a sister of my mother survived in Holland. And I got letters from her. And, but, this I got only, the next, already decided where to go. I, my, my friend, my friend from the camp, she was very ill. She had Tuberculosis. And the whole time I slept with her in one bed, and we drank from the same bowl, and we, and, and, she was very sick. And always in the night saying, "Why are you beating me? Why are you beating me?" "I don't beat you!" She had, we had pains from the camp.

SB: She had dreams from the, from the...

BF: Yes. And she was very sick. She was a half a year in the hospital. And I stayed healthy. I don't know why.

SB: Your, your own strong constitution...

BF: I don't know why. [laughs].

SB: Got you through everything.

BF: Heh.

SB: So then, you went back to Holland, and you found then of course that...

BF: Then I went to, no, I, then, when I came to Auschwitz...

SB: Yes.

BF: I knew that nobody...

SB: Nobody survived in your family.

BF: Survived. It was, I did not remember it, that, that, in, I was in Holland and one of my friends in Holland said, "One of the things you said when you came back, that when you saw the men in Auschwitz, that, then you s-, you said, "I hope my brother will not live any more and then how can he live with such a thing?" That's what I said.

SB: Mmm.

BF: When I saw these, these men. We, we were, our group had a special status. But it was very bad that we, we had something to, to, to hold ourselves. And we stayed with, with our group. This was very, very special that we had our friends. We were so friends together. One helping the other. We weren't alone between strangers.

SB: That's right.

BF: But we [unclear], this was like a family. And the men were, the men, I don't know how a man came so. A man. A woman can always, a wo-, al-, a woman is differe-, if you have a little bit water, a woman will wash herself. A man doesn't do it. If you, what I said, I took a long dress and to, we did not have anything, yes? But we came to this factory in Reichenbach, so we came to the factory. One of the girls managed to have a scissors from somebody. And one of the girls found a needle. And so what did we do? One of the girls knew how to, how to, to, cut, a...

SB: Pattern for a dress?

BF: Dre-...

SB: [unclear].

BF: Yeah, a bra.

SB: Uh huh.

BF: So everybody did it, made the same, and we, we, from this, from this we took out a thread and so we, we, we...

SB: You were able to sew and to wear bras.

BF: To sew it up, you know, and in Germany the time of the war, you had to make dark. There was no light. So in these barracks we were, there were long cur-, long, eh, blankets, curtains on the...

SB: Down to the floor.

BF: On the windows, yes. But the window was only like this on that. And the curtain went down to the floor. We cut it off. And we made socks from it.

SB: [chuckles]

BF: Men will not do it!

SB: That's true. That's very true. Well, they haven't had training for that.

BF: Huh?

SB: So you went back to Holland. And how long did you stay in Holland? Did you begi-, how did you re-...

BF: I came to Holland listen, I came to, I first went in, Holland was broken. Holland was bombed out. Nothing was in Holland. And so I came to Holland by plane.

SB: Yes?

BF: And then I, my friends, these friends [unclear]. She came to fetch me. I, in the meantime I got...

SB: [chuckles]

BF: A few days, [pause] em, I went to the parents of my sick friend...

SB: Yes.

BF: Together with the camp. They had lived in the south of Holland what was in-, it was very difficult to get there. But I got, I had arranged that I go there first. So, I think I went by train and by, by, carriage and by boat, and by bicycle. I don't know how I came there. And all the bridges were blown up.

SB: Had been bombed, yes.

BF: Yes. And so at least I came there. And, but in the meantime, a few days before I, I went back to Holland, I was from, living with the parents of these, these two, the friends, these two pictures. They gave me a telegram. I have the telegram. You, I have it here. "Our home is your home. You will live [unclear]." They were all hidden by, in, with somebody, with non-Jews. So, I went at first in the south of Holland, and it was a few days by her parents. And then I went back to my home town where this friend...

SB: Mmm hmm.

BF: He, these friends, and their mother died already in a certain night. And her father married again another woman. And their father, I, I came, I had to go to my home town which was in the south of Holland to, to near the German border. And it was very difficult. I said, "I will try to come." But there was some train, some bus, some car, but did not know, this day I will come. And I did not know when I would arrive. And also the bridges, there was the Bailey bridge. You know what was the Bailey bridge?

SB: Yes.

BF: [unclear]. So he stood there the whole day, the father of my friend.

SB: He waited.

BF: Yes. He waited for me.

SB: Wonderful.

BF: And then, and he, I'll never forget it. He stood there all day. He waited for me.

SB: So, you mentioned that you have colitis as a result of all of your...

BF: I think so.

SB: You have it permanently.

BF: [unclear] always, [unclear] my husband, I, [unclear] "I don't know I will, [unclear] always have it." But, they also said that it was, there is nothing to do with it. I have proof. This is not, the, not...

SB: It's no doubt the result of the tension and all of the horrible experiences that you went through.

BF: I don't think tension. It's from the bad food, or from the, from the cold, and from the whole thing. I, I certainly have to dysentery, dysentery, I have certain...

SB: Of course.

BF: And I had, four times we had very high fever in the camps. And I never stop eating. I alwa-, I, there were people who had diarrhea and they stopped eating. I never. All things I could put in my mouth I put in. I never stopped eating. And...

SB: Yes.

BF: It's time I showed you this. [shuffling papers; tape off]

[The interview stopped because Mrs. Frank had to leave. She arrived in Israel March 12, 1950 and has lived there ever since. The interview was done in Haifa, Israel.]