

Interview information Transcript

Title	Legacy of the War, Bystander Memories, interview with interviewee RG-50.570.0001
Interviewee	Jaap van Proosdij (JvP), born 15 April 1921
Interviewer	Geraldien von Frijtag Drabbe Künzel (IV) Interakt, Televisie en Multimedia.
Place	Voorburg, Netherlands
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Summary	The interviewee was born on 15 April 1921. From 1943 he worked for the German Hans Calmeyer. Calmeyer decided on questions of descent of Dutch Jews in cases where there was uncertainty about this. The interviewee describes how he had Calmeyer's trust and explains how he attempted, through falsifications among other things, to declare as many Jews as possible to be non-Jews. He talks specifically about the fate of the Portuguese Jews. For his work for Calmeyer he had to go to Westerbork every week, in order to decide with the camp commandant Gemmeker about the Jewish descent of a specific prisoner. In Westerbork he was also forced to reduce by half the so-called Calmeyer List [list of names of Jews who had been declared non-Jewish]. After the war he was involved with many so-called restitution of rights cases, about which he tells many lively anecdotes.
Transcript made by	Vrije Universiteit, M.Vlasblom, C.Jelsma
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File 1

00:01:20

[image 01:00:58.14]

- IV OK. We are going to do an interview and first I want to ask you your name and place and date of birth.
- JvP I am Jacob, my official name is Jacob van Proosdij, I was born on 15 April 1921 in Amsterdam in the Netherlands.
- IV Good.
- JvP And I now live in South Africa.
- IV Good. First I want to ask you something about your youth, in the pre-war period. You were born in 1921. Did you have brothers and sisters?
- JvP Yes, we were five children, I was the second oldest...that's it actually.
- IV You had sisters, two sisters.
- JvP I had two brothers and two sisters.

IV ...two older sisters.
JvP And the sons were the oldest.
IV Aha. And the sisters were the youngest. And your parents knew each other in Amsterdam too?
JvP My father was a lawyer in Amsterdam, my grandfather was a clergyman in Amsterdam. My great grandfather was also a clergyman...at least one of them.

00:02:26

[image 01:02:02.07]

IV And your mother was also from Amsterdam?
JvP No, she was from Amerongen.
IV Yes. And they both lived in Amsterdam?
JvP Yes, I lived in Amsterdam all that time.
IV So you were born in 1921 and then went to school in Amsterdam?
JvP Yes actually a year too early, but my father thought it was better, luckily afterwards...and I was always the youngest in the class. I went to a high school, a Schreuder school institute, it was a Christian school, I should say a Protestant private school. And afterwards I went to the Reformed High School, where they also thought I was too young, but my father also persisted with it. And after that I studied, studied law, and then I skipped a year too and as a result I was fortunate to be able to become a lawyer just after my 21st birthday.

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[image 01:03:01.06]

JvP I remember that very well, because it concerned whether you could still become a lawyer if you were a minor, but we were prevented from that then by doing it afterwards and that was at just the period when the university threatened to be closed, but the exam still came on time. If it had not been in time, then I would also have taken it, then I would have been able to do it later. (laughs) We were well collected.
IV (laughs) But who was that? Let's see, the lecturer was Rutgers then?
JvP Yes, Victor Rutgers was one of them there. I even...I even visited him in prison as a student.
IV Oh really?
JvP Yes, that was very nice. I even took him a box of cigarettes.
IV And what sort...what was your field of study?
JvP Law.
IV Yes but within that? Notarial or was it Dutch...?
JvP No, no, no, in the Netherlands you either became an advocate or a notary, but not both.
IV Yes yes. So you were an advocate?
JvP Yes.
IV And did you then go and work with your father?

00:04:26

[image 01:03:57.12]

JvP No, I got on very well with my father, it wasn't that, but father thought, and I thought too, that it was better to go somewhere else. And I was not entirely sure whether I

should start immediately...and then there was a lawyer's office, Krimpen, Kotting and Wieringa and they were looking for someone, and then I went to work there.

IV And where was that? Also in Amsterdam?

JvP It was in Amsterdam, in Vondelstraat.

IV Yes. And your father's office was...?

JvP In Amsterdam on Nassaukade.

IV And you all lived there too?

JvP Yes we all lived there.

IV And your other, your older brothers. How much older were they actually?

JvP We were a year and a half apart; we came quickly one after another. My eldest brother became a doctor, he was still studying during the war and became a doctor afterwards...and he then became a physician and then lung doctor and finally a geriatrician, which was a new specialisation. I believe he was the first geriatrician.

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[image 01:05:00.01]

JvP My other brother also became a doctor, but he could only start after the war. He studied in Edinburgh because he thought it safer there as my other brother had been a bit active in the university on the side of the underground and they were anxious that some of the professors would draw it out of him.

IV Yes, yes. Was that after the war that he...?

JvP It was after the war, yes. We were still careful then. (laughs)

IV And the two sisters, what did they do?

JvP My elder sister studied English after the war, but then almost immediately after the war married someone in the espionage group which she also worked for. And he later became head of the BvD [*Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*], the Inland Security Service.

00:06:27

[image 01:05:53.10]

JvP And my younger sister studied law and my father did not permit her to marry until she had completed her studies. That was how it was. But she never practised...she married an organist.

IV Yes. And so the five of you eventually became seven.

JvP Yes and we all survived.

IV Yes. And you all lived at home? Or did you yourself live at home?

JvP No, at the beginning of the war my elder brother disappeared to a degree, but he remained in Amsterdam. My younger brother went into hiding somewhere in Zaanstreek but we had no idea where he was, we only discovered that after the war. My elder sister, well she was in the espionage service so she disappeared from time to time when it was too dangerous. And I and my younger sister always remained at Nassaukade, but I slept elsewhere a few times when I was anxious that something was going to happen there.

IV Yes.

00:07:26

[image 01:06:50.09]

JvP And my mother was also sensible. We all had our own speciality in illegal work and we knew as little as possible about each other.

IV But after the war did you talk about it with each other?

JvP A bit...but not much.

IV And before the war what was it like? Because you were, you lived in Amsterdam, you grew up in Amsterdam and did you have much contact with Jews? Or were you aware of antisemitism?

JvP I was never aware of antisemitism before the war, actually in the war not among the Dutch, except of course the NSB-ers [Dutch Nazis] and that sort of people, but my father was originally with a Jewish lawyer for a few years, but otherwise...

00:08:18

[image 01:07:39.23]

JvP I knew that Jews were a bit different, but I actually never had contact. Apart from a period before the war, but I can't remember exactly how it happened...but my father had a woman colleague who helped at an organisation which supported German Jewish immigrants. And she had asked me to do something before the war. And I think for a while during the war, but I can't recall it any more...then once a month I visited a number of German Jewish immigrants. Whether I took them money or just went to chat with them a bit I no longer remember. They were mostly typical older people with antique furniture and silver etc but who still lived in poverty in a flat.

00:09:09

[image 01:08:29.04]

JvP And the other contact I had, when you (...) walked along the Amstellaan or somewhere in Amsterdam on a Friday, you were asked the whole time to tear open a letter.
(laughs)

IV Yes.

JvP But it remained like that. And only in 1942 of course did I come face to face with difficulties. And I did not notice any antisemitism still, I regarded them simply as I would almost say, 'as normal people', but as ordinary Dutch people, nothing more.

IV But at your school, were there also Jewish fellow pupils? Or at university?

JvP I don't know, I don't know.

IV Normally it was not at all (...?)

JvP I cannot remember that I ever met one in that way, but it may have been so. But I don't know. For me it made no difference.

IV Yes.

00:10:06

01:09:23.20]

JvP But it was barely a Protestant-Reformed university, the Vrije Universiteit, so you came into contact with others much too little.

IV Yes.

JvP I do know that I found it difficult. You had to study philosophy, but you only heard their philosophy and not those of others. Except that the others were all wrong...as regards philosophy, but that is how it was.

- IV You mainly learnt Protestant teaching above all?
JvP Yes.
IV And did you also go to church?
JvP Yes, yes. We always went to church.
IV Which church did you go to?
JvP To the Keizersgracht church. And as children there we were on the first floor, and then in the war when we were almost old enough, my father took the risk of sitting downstairs in the church.

00:11:00

[image 01:10:15.13]

- JvP But my father was always a little bit informal. For example he never wore a hat, which was actually required at that time. The hat he had was a top hat, which was no longer suitable at the time, so he always carried it in his hand. And when we once pleaded with him about it he said "Now I will put it on immediately". And then he put it on immediately. (laughs) That was how he was...and my grandfather was also like that.
IV But your father was a minister, so he had to (...?)...
JvP He was indeed a minister but he also did crazy things. (laughs)
IV But he struck out on another path at a given moment, your father, to become a judge or lawyer? He did not become a minister?
JvP Oh no, that was no tradition.
IV And you did not feel it was a tradition either?
JvP No, no, not at all. Actually I wanted to do the law from the beginning, as my two brothers wanted to be doctors from the start.

00:11:58

[image 01:11:11.02]

- JvP And they had no thought of studying law, I must say. My father and I spent a whole evening trying to explain to my one brother the difference between ownership and possession, but he still didn't get it. It was something else, he had another mentality.
IV Yes. And you wanted to study law from the beginning? What appeals to you about? Or what appealed to you about it?
JvP I don't know, it interested me. It was, I would hardly say it was a kind of vocation, but it was what I wanted.
IV Yes...and in Amsterdam at that time the Jews were very well represented in judicial power and the advocacy. And you said that your father among others...
JvP The only thing I was aware of about Jews was that my father worked in Mr Levi's office and that in the war we hid all Mr Levi's shares. But beyond that I did not know who was or was not a Jew.

00:12:59

[image 01:12:10.05]

- IV And how did you hide them? Had he asked you to hide them?
JvP Yes, when it naturally became dangerous then he gave them to my father and my father and I buried them in the ground beneath the house in waterproof paper. And then...shall I explain?
IV Yes.

JvP Yes, then a few months later we wanted to have a look again if it was all right and we dug them up and they were soaking wet and over a weekend my father drew the curtains of the lowest floor of his office, put on all the stoves and the whole floor was covered with the share certificates and by Sunday they were dry and then we tucked them away inside books in the library. My father had a very large library. And thus they survived the war. (laughs)

IV And after the war did he come back to fetch them?

00:13:59

[image 01:13:07.07]

JvP Yes, yes, we gave them back again. I cannot recall how he had survived, but in any case it all turned out well. We were lucky. None of us was imprisoned.

IV Yes, and then came May 1940 and actually very quickly after that the German measures against Jews began. What did you learn of that? Can you remember any of that?

JvP Now.

IV The February strike for example?

JvP Yes the February strike I know...not awfully much. At the beginning of the war we were more troubled about the colleague, my father's one colleague, he was the son of the Dutch minister Gerbrandy. And he was very quickly arrested to become a hostage. And ultimately we were therefore involved...

00:14:58

[image 01:14:03.21]

JvP I had warned him in good time and so he went away, so they then took my father and he insisted on turning himself in and he did so. He was released later because he supposedly had TB, which I do not believe he had, but it did not matter, and everything went well afterwards. So that was what I was more involved with then, I must say. And of course I had to study. And I remember the Amsterdam strike and therefore I do not believe that the Dutch were antisemitic. I never noticed any of it.

IV OK.

JvP But afterwards, only in 1942 when it really began, I went to the office of Van Krimpen, and Van Krimpen was then the lawyer for the Portuguese Synagogue, for the Sephardi, the chairman was a Professor Palasch (...?) and Van Krimpen was the Dutch lawyer for the Dresdner Bank...

00:16:06

[image 01:15:09.16]

JvP ...through which he had German contacts, and as a result Palasch came to him. And perhaps he could then organise something. He could do very little himself, except that when there was a discussion with them, then Van Krimpen was present, but in fact the work was done by Kotting from the start, his partner, one of his partners. And I assisted Kotting more or less and so the two of us got together and we were soon involved up to our necks. (laughs)

IV And why did you take the decision to do that? Why did you go to help Jews, because that is eventually what happened?

00:17:02

[image 01:16:02.17]

- JvP Why not? I mean (laughs) if you do get involved , if you can do anything, then you do it. I am very old-fashioned, and I feel that a calling, a profession, has something to do with mission. Not dramatically, but ordinarily, you are there to help people, just as well as a doctor. And not to make money. And money was not important for me, it was...your vocation is your vocation. Thus if you can help someone, you are there for that. That is what it comes down to actually.
- IV But you specialised in one type. (telephone rings)
(...)

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[image 01:16:58.17]

(...)

- JvP What did you ask? Oh, why I did it?
- IV Yes.
- JvP Look, at the start, when you just become a lawyer, then you must get a bit of practice. That means you do all divorces pro bono, so I did that. In that couple of years I did a couple of hundred. Dreadfully boring...well mostly. One time it was nice. And criminal cases, I would not do criminal cases, I never did a single one, I was too anxious that if I defended a bicycle thief he would also steal my bicycle afterwards, that is actually what it comes down to, I have absolutely never done a criminal case.

00:19:00

[image 01:17:56.12]

- JvP Therefore I did divorces and then a bit later, after a few months, something came up that Kotting needed me for, in connection with the Jews. And so I got involved. If I had worked in my father's office, but I do not believe that we would [have worked] together. It was better that I was not there...he also did a few Jewish cases, but mostly defended illegals and suchlike. So to a degree he went in another direction. But I do remember that my father was also very interested in Jewish history and in the war he studied about the Jews and suchlike specially...as a hobby, in a manner of speaking.
- IV Why? Perhaps because at that moment it was so terribly unusual?
- JvP Yes my father was never a conformist. (laughs)

00:20:02

[image 01:18:55.16]

- JvP He was never that and...we regarded the Reformed approach a bit of a Reformed clique, I might say. My father's stance had the intention to be outside that. As Gerbrandy also did that...at that time before the war Colijn was the man and the hero and goodness knows what, and we did not go along with that at all, and Gerbrandy came to the fore from that. And in the same manner; my father never supported traditional Reformed politics. And I did not care for it either. Therefore it came about that when Kotting needed me I got involved.

IV And did you also find that it was more interesting, the parentage cases, did you find them more interesting than the divorce cases for example, were they more gripping...could you do more there?

00:21:02

[image 01:19:53.14]

JvP Yes, divorce cases...that is...divorce cases are just routine, that...When you have done three of them...except for a single one that was a bit crazy. But that was how it turned out. I did not do it because I found Jewish cases more interesting, but because it came my way.

IV Yes. What exactly were parentage cases? Because you say it as if it was entirely ordinary, but what were they?

JvP (laughs) It was crazy actually. You see, all Jews had to report, just after the war, a few months after it, they had to fill in forms that went to the Central Population Registry in The Hague. All the forms were there. And soon after they all had to agree to carry them, but of course there were always a few doubtful cases from the beginning; whether someone was or was not Jewish.

00:22:00

[image 01:20:49.10]

JvP ...and we had a civilian government and not the military one that most other countries had, with Seyss-Inquart, he was later sentenced to death. And Seyss-Inquart appointed someone for Interior Affairs, a Dr Wimmer. His chief assistant I can say was a Dr Stürer, they were both doctors of course, when you are a legal specialist in Germany. And Dr Stürer knew Calmeyer. And Seyss-Inquart or Stürer or someone also needed a person to handle the cases, therefore Calmeyer was appointed as the one who had to decide in doubtful cases of registration. And at the beginning that looked very innocent, later of course it became very important.

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[image 01:21:42.00]

JvP And Calmeyer was a soldier, I believe he reached the rank of corporal but no higher. He was in the Netherlands so he thought it best to come out of that, he was a cultivated person too..which also helped. And so he was appointed to that post. And it was so interesting that Seyss-Inquart or Wimmer never intervened, Calmeyer decided and that was final. There was a case, perhaps we will come to it, where someone tried to appeal with disastrous results for that individual. That is how it was. There were...where we began, that was the Portuguese case. And we, that is Van Krimpen or Palasch or Kotting, claimed that the Portuguese were not Jews, which they were of course...but they were certainly different from the Sephardi, the Ashkenazi (?)

00:24:01

[image 01:22:45.18]

JvP So immediately already at the beginning there was a separate *Sperrliste* for Portuguese Jews. It is a list, which came from Calmeyer of course, of people who must not be picked up.

IV For deportation.

JvP For deportation to Westerbork. There was also a separate *Sperrliste* for parentage cases for the others. Also a long list, also by Calmeyer. It was then. On that list, at the start it went very sloppily, and everyone was placed on such a list, but after a little while it was very important of course, because then of course you were relatively safe. There was also a doubtful type of list of people who had been baptised, that was the Barneveld list and it had everything, each list had a number and then you got a stamp in your passport...in your identity card.

0:24:58

[image 01:23:40.11]

JvP Whether that was the Portuguese 6, I no longer know. Calmeyer had under him a Mr De Waard, a Dutch official who studied each dossier very reliably and thoroughly, so nothing very much came from it. Then there was Mr Miessen, he was a German, I think he was retired, a genealogist, he was also involved with the population register or suchlike. He knew how to do genealogical research. And then Calmeyer had a German secretary whom I never met. And then he had three ladies who worked on dossiers, whom we later dealt with. And then we had one of those two ladies who received a regular salary from us, compared with what she received from Calmeyer, so that was very easy and pleasant.

00:26:05

[image 01:24:44.00]

JvP The other names, we sometimes took them for an expensive dinner at Lensvelt Nicola.

IV You actually bought them?

JvP Yes that is such an awful word. (laughs) We recompensed them for services provided. Yes, that was bribery, and the others who received them at least once, then we took them out to dinner.

IV But how did the people find you? How did the people registered as Jews find you? The people wanted to take their star off at a particular moment, lose their Jewish status, so how did they find the office? How did they know?

JvP They heard about it from each other probably.

IV But did you always work for acquaintances or were there also unknown people?

JvP No. Actually I did not know any Jewish people. Kotting was married to a Jewish lady and she wore a star.

00:26:59

[image 01:25:36.02]

JvP And he had a child then. But Calmeyer did not know that and he had always kept that secret. But his mother in law, his wife's mother, declared Kotting non-Jewish fairly early. And the result was that that was reported to the Population Registry. And the official saw, she wondered whether others would be affected by that? And she found that she had a daughter, Kotting's wife, and thus somehow or other he got, I heard that after the war, but he never told me, when he got a letter from the Population Registry, how it was, whether his wife did not also have to change her registration. She would have been finished with her star, but he then said, "It is not necessary." Do nothing...in any case it was fortunate like that.

00:28:00

[image 01:36:34.08]

JvP If he had done that of course he would not have had much more to say to Calmeyer. Calmeyer never knew it. And that was, and I only noted that after the war, it was an unbelievable sacrifice that those two made. It was very special, because it was always a danger...

(cameraman coughs; talk in between)

00:28:59

[image 01:27:31.05]

IV Good; to come back to the parentage cases for a moment; so Calmeyer decided in doubtful cases, but there was therefore the possibility that lawyers brought those doubtful cases to him?

JvP Yes, how it worked was you sent the appeal to the official, to *Innere Verwaltung* [Internal Authorities] I think, or to Inland Affairs or to Domestic Affairs, it was sent to various addresses, I later grasped exactly how it worked so that we could do something there. But things came there from all sorts of lawyers, and I have not yet mentioned that there were also quite some Portuguese Jews in Rotterdam, in The Hague, and they had a Mr Nijg as lawyer, therefore he worked with Kotting.

IV Yes.

JvP But Van Krimpen was marginal.

IV Yes.

JvP So it was chiefly Nijg and Kotting who did the Portuguese cases. And I was then involved and that is how I had contact with the other cases.

00:30:01

[image 01:28:30.13]

IV And that was immediately in 1942 the Portuguese, it was about 42, when you came to the office, then that began very quickly...

JvP Yes, and what happened...I don't know exactly which month any more, but it must have been late 42, when Calmeyer spoke with Nijg and Kotting about the Portuguese list, he was under a bit of pressure to reduce the lists, because the SS did not like such lists, they wanted to pick up everyone they could pick up. And they were obliged to send 1,000 people a week to Westerbork, so that had to be topped up. It was too awkward using raids and suchlike. So he was under pressure to get on with that list, because nothing happened. And so he discussed it with Kotting and Nijg and said, "don't you know a lawyer or someone who can help me to go through the lists, because it has never actually been investigated..."

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[image 01:29:33.05]

JvP And they said "Yes we do perhaps know someone" and they would see if he was willing. And then Kotting asked me whether I would do it and then I went to Calmeyer with him. And then Calmeyer asked me if I was willing to help him with that list. And

I said “Yes, I am a lawyer so I will do it, but I have difficulty with the persecution of the Jews so I will do it as a lawyer, but if I come into a conflict with my conscience you must not blame me if I say so to you, and then I can’t do any more”. No it was,(?) but I never had difficulty with my conscience, so it was fine. Then I got a room. And I received all the Jewish dossiers in that room.

00:32:03

[image 01:30:27.21]

IV Where was it?

JvP In Internal Affairs, at the Binnenhof, on the first floor, I remember it well still.

IV On the first floor?

JvP Yes.

IV And Calmeyer also had an office?

JvP Yes he had a very grand office with its own bathroom next door. He was a senior official.

IV Yes.

JvP And he was the highest official in that part of Internal Affairs, and another nice story: Calmeyer came to the office on a bicycle and he put the bicycle in the building, but the Secretary-General did not allow it, they were not tidy, so it was announced that he could not park his bicycle in view there. “All right” said Calmeyer and the next day he came with his bicycle, put it on his shoulder and put it in his room. (laughs) That lasted two days, then they told him (..) because couldn’t have that either.

00:33:02

[image 01:31:24.13]

JvP That was how he was, he knew what his position was there. So I got a room there and all the dossiers and I got a complete list of all the Portuguese as they were on the list. Then I took the list to Amsterdam and gave it to the Jewish Council and asked them to look at the list and give me a list of all the people who had already died or already been deported or were in mixed marriages, because those were the three things through which they were safe...and that was a considerable part of the list because there was everything on it and there were a whole lot who were no longer living or had already been deported, for whom there was nothing to do. That was the part that was actually my purpose, to get that so that I could go to Calmeyer without saying what it was. But my other purpose was to see the dossiers.

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[image 01:32:24.17]

JvP ...because in them you could see how the appeals were received, what sort of acknowledgement stamps were on the things, and suchlike wheezes that I could use later on. Because it was somewhere in 1942, there was already an order that no new appeals were permitted to be done. So the later you did it, the more suspicious it was. It was that if we wanted anything it was good to be able to backdate things, which we also made good use of. And naturally I could simply insert a new dossier in between the others. Miss Appelman who helped us did that, then we could do something with it, that was very nice.

IV But on the first floor, where Calmeyer also was, I accept, were these three Dutch adminis...

JvP That was a separate office and then Miessen had a separate office and De Waard had a separate office and I had one.

00:35:06

[image 01:33:23.15]

IV And there was a...

JvP But I was never an employed official, I was a...

IV Yes.

JvP It was informal.

IV And there was also an archive room, or was that...?

JvP Yes I can't any longer exactly picture it, but I think all the dossiers were in the same room, we were like the three ladies, but I am not sure any more. After the war I shut down on it and only years later did I think about it again. It was also the safest for yourself.

IV Yes. But this was the work that you did as lawyers, which you also did, which was mainly falsifying documents?

JvP That came afterwards. At the start I only did that and when I had obtained enough dossiers, enough information, and I had received that list, then I went to Calmeyer and...

00:36:03

[image 01:34:18.02]

JvP ...while Mr De Waard did that once a week at the most or something like that, I had done I don't know how many hundred, then I gave him a list and said "Look, these people who don't belong on the Portuguese, who are not...who perhaps have one Portuguese grandparent...but they do not come under scrutiny." And there were a few hundred so he was dead lucky and he trusted be blindly after that.

IV Yes. And that Portuguese list from which you had to select, they were people with, I believe, with Eastern European Jewish...

JvP Yes, you see, if it says that Mr Jesun (?) D'Oliviera had one grandparent called Jesun (?) D'Oliviera and all the others were Ashkenazi, then according to Calmeyer that was no longer a Portuguese case. And that sort of thing, if there was some mistake, his ancestry was doubtful, or something like that, the he was taken off the list.

00:37:05

[image 01:35:18.08]

JvP Of course a whole lot remained who really were doubtful.

IV But it was work more for genealogists than lawyers?

JvP A lawyer is someone who inspects dossiers and looks at whether such documents are sound. I did not do a genealogical examination, but you could indeed see it to a degree from the proposal, because they had to say how many grandparents they had. Your application form was a copy of it I think. I no longer know exactly how it worked but the trick was to make the list shorter.

IV Yes. And you travelled to The Hague frequently.

JvP Yes and back again.

IV And did you get exemption for that, or, did you get, could you then go on the train still?

JvP Yes you could still go on trains until 1944, I always went by train...first class, I thought I earned it. (laughs)

00:37:58

[image 01:36:08.18]

JvP I had a bit of support from the underground, because of course you get nothing for that. I got, I don't know any more, say a hundred guilders salary from Van Krimpen, it was not much...but at that time you could not get much as a lawyer, but I had a pot for our publications from which we paid Miss Appelman and our train fares and so on. Because at the beginning we asked clients for nothing or a nominal contribution of 300 guilders for a complete case. And you did need it, you needed that more or less to pay for everything.

IV And then you discussed with Kotting "What shall we do, 300 maximum?"

JvP Something like that, yes.

IV Yes.

JvP Because I know he had one case of a professor, a medical professor, who had been able to Aryanise with his whole family.

00:39:06

[image 01:37:13.22]

JvP ...a well know paediatrician, and he had never asked him for anything. And then later on in the war we had a sort of committee, an informal committee, to discuss how it should be after the war, Professor Bregstein was the chairman more or less. Or in any case he was there. And Kotting thought that the paediatrician, he was a bit rough with him and a bit...he said to Bregstein, "What is making him so rough about it?" Bregstein said, "You never asked him for anything...and that is very difficult for someone if you have saved his life and asked for nothing." He said, "What should I do?" He said, "Send him a bill." And then he sent him a bill for 300 guilders I think, or thereabouts, although it was a lot more work than that. And he paid promptly and after that he was friendly and if a child was unwell he came out in the middle of the night to look after him.

IV Yes, yes.

00:40:05

[image 01:38:11.05]

JvP And from that I learned that you must be careful if you do something for someone. I am always too proud to take money and that is a fault. You are obliged not to be too proud. Every time you must permit someone to give you something. And then you must be grateful for it. And that is a lesson that I learned young fortunately, because it also applied later. Interesting.

IV Yes.

JvP But I can imagine, and only recently remember it now. I was there as a young brat lawyer, and then you had a case on which someone's life depended. And if you made a mistake he would die. And I shiver about it again now when I think about it...because that does not normally happen.

IV No.

JvP It is... Well, luckily I never thought about it so much.

00:41:04

[image 01:39:07.11]

JvP But I still worry about it now.

IV You had two big cases, including that of Bregstein, Professor Bregstein. Can you say something about that?

JvP That case, it was fairly late on in the war. Bregstein came from Lithuania, and he had typed his application form himself and submitted it. He had one Jewish relative, I must say, a certain Pollak who had connections with the population, the Central Population Registry. And he could get hold of such application forms. Bregstein had said, "Can you do something for me? I will help you with your dissertation." (laughs) Which was never serious as far as I was concerned.

00:42:04

[image 01:40:04.15]

JvP But it was more a joke. And when I asked that Pollak to retrieve Bregstein's form, and then we filled it in, Bregstein typed: "I am not certain about my grandparents, I cannot yet prove it but I will return to it later." And submitted the form again to the Population Registry. Then we had anthropological research done by Professor de Vroe, Arie de Vroe, who was at the same time an outstanding illegal contact. In his report he said that Bregstein's skull was particularly large, and it could not be Jewish, and so on. So we had that too and when Bregstein saw it he laughed himself silly and said, "Now I understand why I always had trouble getting a hat that was big enough!" (laughs)

00:43:10

[image 01:41:08.11]

JvP Yes, there were amusing things. And then we made up a letter, dated in 1941 or 1942, I think, but an earlier letter, in which he returned to his application form and said he had now obtained documents and he then set out further proof. And to make this letter genuine, in the margin, I did not write it myself, we had someone, a certain Teutscher, who could imitate handwriting and signatures and suchlike. In the margin it said "Miss Haring", who was one of the ladies there, "bring it to me".

00:44:00

[image 01:41:56.20]

JvP Or no, not in that letter, it was submitted with the stamp only. And then six months later we dated another letter which said "I have heard nothing, how is this progressing?" And at the side in Mr De Waard's handwriting it said "Miss Haring give me the dossier" and then his initials and the date. And he also located the dossier. Then I went to Mr De Waard and said, "Look, Professor Bregstein asked me to make inquiries because he never hears anything." He said, "I don't recall that I have ever seen it," and he phoned Miss Haring and said, "Does that dossier exist?" and she came

in with the dossier and he opened it and said, "I am dreadfully sorry, I had completely forgotten it." (laughs)

IV But did you stop it because you had access to Calmeyer's cases?

JvP Yes, we could do that sort of thing.

IV Yes, but you, were you the only one who could get there? Or could Kotting also come inside?

00:45:01

[image 01:42:54.15]

JvP Yes, I could more easily than he could. It was easier. But he could too because we were frequently together and in any case he could ask Miss Appelman, but I did so by chance because I was now somewhat friendly with Bregstein. Such a paternal figure for me. (laughs) And that was it actually. Later it all went wrong because a while later, before we had taken further steps...then I was suddenly telephoned: Pollak had been arrested, at the station.

IV He was the colleague there?

JvP He was the man who had removed the registration forms.

IV In the Population Registry?

JvP Yes. He was arrested at the station, I still do not know why and what happened. But in any case the same afternoon people were picked up, he had apparently helped with ration coupons and suchlike.

00:46:01

[image 01:43:52.22]

JvP And the Germans had been to his house and found all kinds of names and people who were arrested left all over the place. This subdued us and I went to Bregstein and said, "What must we do, because if he told them about it, then I was there and you were also there. Must we go into hiding now or should we take a chance that he did not betray us? And we discussed it for a while and finally actually came to a conclusion. Bregstein was an important man among foreign concerns in America and I, Pollak knew that I knew the Gerbrandys. And Pollak also knew that he still had to be alive after the war and that it was therefore better to leave the pair of us in peace. And then we took the chance and he never betrayed us.

00:47:01

[image 01:44:50.05]

JvP But that is not the end of the story, shall I continue?

IV Yes.

JvP Er, six months later I think, or in any case later...Pollak was suddenly released. That was already suspicious, and soon afterwards the rumour went round that he had become an agent-provocateur (?). One day he phoned me and asked if he could come to speak to me about an important case and I said, "Yes of course" and at that time I had already left Van Krimpen and I had an office with my father. And I was fairly scared of course and discussed it with Gerbrandy, the young Gerbrandy, and he climbed into the cupboard, in order to intervene ultimately, and Pollak came and he said, yes he had been freed and now the rumour was going round that he was an agent-provocateur...

00:48:03

[image 01:45:49.22]

JvP ...and if I could help him he would be glad to make contact with the underground so that he could clarify what had happened. And if I knew anyone. I said, "I know nothing, I have nothing to do with the underground. I am just a lawyer and I handle cases. And I have no idea!" Eventually, after chatting a bit, he said, "May I make a phone call in the other room?" Then he went to another room and I thought, "Oh, what is happening now?" and then I said, "Good, shame that I couldn't help you," and that was the end. And two weeks later Arie de Vrou came to me and said: "I haven't dared to say for years"...but he was the ombudsman for the underground to decide if someone had to be liquidated. Because it was so in those days. You could just liquidate someone, you could not accomplish it another way. That sounds very atrocious, but it is so.

00:49:06

[image 01:46:50.08]

JvP ...And there had once been a mistake of course and I could tell him. And I just said to him, I said, "I don't know whether or not it is, but it has happened". And then a week later, our office was originally in de Lairesestraat at the corner with Brandtstraat, and he was shot just at the corner.

IV Wow.

JvP After the war I had to come to the judge-commissioner once more to ask what had happened because it was a murder case of course and he was very friendly to me, I had to sit in such and such chair opposite the window...He said, "I always have the suspects sit there so that they look into the light." (laughs) That was not necessary for me, in any case, because I then explained it and nothing further came of it. It is a very awful case actually, but it turned out well for us.

00:50:04

[image 01:47:45.22]

IV Yes, but it was a very daunting time. I mean, there is so much tension every day. You knew that you could be caught every day, and...

JvP Yes, yes. But this is a case that went well, which also could have changed later. And so it is, for us it always went well but there were a couple of times when it had been on the edge.

IV And that was with Bregstein among others, or did you not find it so?

JvP Oh that was one of the less dangerous almost. (laughs) At least it was dangerous, but there were others of course.

IV Ah yes. You did once say, about a dossier that I believe was Kotting's mother in law, that it was discovered and...

JvP Look, just before *Dolle Dinsdag* ['Mad Tuesday, 5 September 1944], there was a certain Ten Kate, he was head of genealogy (..?) that means anti-Jewish of course.

00:51:07

[image 01:48:46.13]

JvP And he went back to the Jews in the previous century and looked at who the ancestors were, in order to thereby go from top to bottom, whereas what we did; we could plant something if there was half a page free in the Population Register or in the Register of Births, we could write something different, Teutscher did that for us. So when you went from bottom to top, you could never find anything changed, but you could if you went from top to bottom. And I think, it was certainly a bit later, about a week before *Dolle Dinsdag*, Ten Kate was on to us. He had found something about our office from Kotting. But luckily the man was cowardly enough to flee on *Dolle Dinsdag* and never came back again.

00:52:04

[image 01:49:41.07]

IV Was he an SS member or a Dutchman?

JvP He was a Dutchman, I don't know more. Perhaps he was in the SS, in any case he was a fanatical antisemite, evidently...

IV Did he visit you then?

JvP No but I understand that he summoned Kotting.

IV Yes.

JvP But I only heard that story when Kotting was already dead, so I was never able to ask him. And he never mentioned it before me.

IV But you did not ever go into hiding, because it was certainly dangerous for you.

JvP I did once disappear for one or two nights.

IV When was that then?

JvP When there was a rumour or when we thought that they had something again and, yes, rumours were always cropping up.

IV But how did you experience that? How did it feel?

JvP You go on living, you live where you live, but it was sometimes a bit uncanny. We followed...Well, do you know the case of Elschot Perreira (?).

00:53:01

[image 01:50:35.21]

IV Tell me.

JvP It was also on the edge. You see, the Portuguese case that went well, we tried replacements and I know it all went well until the end of 1943 or thereabouts. The dates are vague for me but at a given moment it was referred to Germany and then they decided in Berlin that a couple of people there must look at them. It was lethal of course because they looked entirely Jewish and there was much inbreeding and suchlike. Generally they were a noble type of people but they were not spectacularly anti-Semitic. So then they were all suddenly picked up...

00:53:57

[image 01:51:29.11]

JvP ...and sent to Westerbork so that they could be seen, and then they were seen and then they were not accepted as non-Jewish and that was that. Then they were picked up. Kotting had a young man who had declared his parents non-Jewish, I had nothing to do with it. There were cases that he did alone or I did alone. So that young man was not Jewish, but he was engaged to an Elsa Perreira, who was a young medical student

in her final year. We decided to declare Else Perreira as non-Jewish too, in a separate case. For one reason or another because I believe the boy was a neighbour of Kotting, or some such, we did not want to take any risk at all. So we decided to falsify everything, including the cover of the dossier and everything.

00:55:01

[image 01:52:30.24]

JvP But that took a while, we had to have a verdict from the court, that was easy, you could do so; after the war I stopped doing it. But I was a bit tempted when I actually had to get such a verdict for divorce or something. I thought, "Why all this difficulty, I can do it myself just as well", but I never did it any more afterwards. But that was then and we had to have a birth certificate. I no longer know how, what the case was, but we made something from it. Her mother had probably committed adultery or suchlike. It looked genuine, because when she saw it later she was scared. Just as Marianne was scared when she saw it. (laughs) But in any case we were busy with it and I received a telephone call from Westerbork from the *Antragstelle* or someone, but it was secret because they were not allowed to say anything, only that they would be going on a transport that Tuesday, it was on Sunday.

00:55:58

[image 01:53:25.08]

IV This Else was in, was in..?

JvP Yes she was picked up together with all other Portuguese, she was in Westerbork and on Sunday it came through and they were busy drawing up the list...and the people had to pack their suitcases and so on. I went to The Hague on that Monday morning and from the room that I could always use there I telephoned the *Antragstelle* at Westerbork and said that on behalf of Calmeyer, there was a certain Elsa Perreira, I did not say anything about Portuguese, because of course that was...not...I didn't know that, but that a certain Elsa Perreira was there and on the parentage list. She had to come off the parentage list because the case would be decided within a couple of weeks. So she had to come off the list for that time. It was good. A few hours later I was in Calmeyer's office for something or other...

00:56:59

[image 01:54:24.05]

JvP ...and he had two telephones on his table and one of them went and he answered it and talked and then the other one also rang, it had never happened before and never happened later. And I picked that one up and said, "Calmeyer office" and it was Westerbork to confirm it. Which had also never happened before. And I said "Yes" and was finished before Calmeyer was and then he said what was it and I said, "I don't know how they knew, but it was meant for me." And that was all. And it, I don't generally believe in miracles, but I thought that was a miracle, because it was utterly peculiar. Year later I heard the story from her, from her side, the other side. She was already almost in the train before things did not go ahead. And then, a week or two later when we had assembled everything, a neat dossier, and Kotting was very good making the German decisions in Calmeyer's language...

00:58:03

[image 01:55:25.04]

JvP ...we had made the decisions and signed everything and we took the dossier there, without the decisions, and then Kotting put the decisions in and we went to Calmeyer together and discussed something else and after a while he went out of Calmeyer's room and said, "Ah, he has signed it!" and then we had the official letter made and then I myself took the letter to Westerbork and then said to the head of the *Antragstelle*, a certain Dr Ottenstein, he was an outstanding, he was a good person, "I would appreciate it," usually that took two or three days, "if I could have it back." And then I brought it back with me.

IV Yes.

00:59:02

[image 01:56:21.24]

JvP The she came back and in Amersfoort or somewhere like that I believe, her fiancé waited for her and they disappeared. And they married each other the same evening and that was that. And for years afterwards we never spoke about it to each other.

IV Yes.

JvP And then about twenty years later she came to work in South Africa on a missionary training course for a while and she came to see us and I talked with her the whole evening and she told me her side and I told her mine, which she had never heard before. And then it came out that it had been in the nick of time for her.

IV Wow.

JvP It is a very remarkable case.

IV Yes it is almost a...

JvP And it was a case that was completely falsified, nothing at all was genuine. Mostly you mixed the genuine with the false.

IV Yes.

01:00:02

[image 01:57:19.13]

IV But it is very personal isn't it. Because you rescue real people who, such as that lady, who you know...or in any case it is...

JvP I got to know her there.

IV (...?) someone and that is a very intense...

JvP Yes and sometimes it is a whole family.

IV Yes. Can you remember whether there were also cases that did not succeed?

JvP I...there is one that almost didn't. There are two that almost didn't succeed that I remember, but they did ultimately succeed one way or another. The one was one of my very first cases, a Jewish man in a mixed marriage. We called him Brammetje Polak and he was rather rich, because he fed his dog salmon in the war. (laughs) Which you can do. (laughs) But he had an adopted daughter who was about six or so...

01:01:04

[image 01:58:19.05]

JvP ..and was therefore nothing, she was Jewish, she was fully Jewish. There was a proposal for what I dealt with. It was not a very strong proposal...and the one succeeded better than the other, I must say. And I was, it was in 1942, no in 43, just before Christmas. I went to discuss it with Calmeyer and Calmeyer looked at it and said, "No I cannot do this, I must decline it". I tried, but I must say it was a weak case, so you could not say very much. But I suddenly became rather disappointed and said to Calmeyer, "You are just like Herod." He was shaken by it, and I said, "Yes you also cause the death of little children."

01:02:02

[image 01:59:15.01]

JvP Well, and Germans are sentimental about Christmas of course and he was very disconcerted and said, "Yes but I cannot permit it!" Then I said, "But you can at least do nothing, do not decide now and postpone it temporarily." And he thought about it a bit. And then he said "All right" and he gave me the dossier and said, "I won't do it." And then we finished it off for him and then it was in order. But that was a dreadful case where Calmeyer did think twice and where he did have a reason to say "no". But it is much later, right at the end it once happened that he had no reason to say "no" and then it almost failed...

IV How was that? What case was that?

JvP It was a confectioner and his wife and their two children, a family of four.

01:03:03

[image 01:00:13.13]

JvP ...I do not know exactly how the case was, but it was not a bad case and I had discussed it with him and he had said, "All right, it is in order but I want this birth certificate or marriage certificate or whatever it was to be confirmed in Germany by Miessen. Once you have that I will do it." When Miessen had received it a month later and it was in order, it was really genuine, then I ran into very bad luck, but of course I did not know that. On that day, a particular day, Calmeyer had to stand in for the German representative at BZ [*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken*; Ministry of Foreign Affairs], so he was in the room, a very neat room on the Lange Voorhout, and those are always neat.

01:04:04

[image 02:01:12.15]

JvP I still remember: there was a painting by De Lairese, the street where the office was, and the rest was very neat. I went there, he actually had nothing to do there, but he had to be there officially. I had taken the case with me and I thought "There is a good chance of settling it." I gave him the dossier and said, "Look, you have already looked at it and said that...and we have just received it here. So now you can settle it." He said, "You will see that I can." And he took a piece of paper and started to write out the whole decision, which he never did.

01:05:00

[image 02:02:06.08]

JvP I was completely desperate, I had had a dreadful visit to Westerbork, I was still unwell from it, I began to cry...and I was dead embarrassed and I had my hand over my face (makes gesture) and suchlike. And he went on writing and signed it, but of course noticed what was going on. And then he became uneasy of course because we got on well together across the road, and said, "Are they friends of yours?" I said, "No, I don't know them, they are lousy people..." I was completely furious and he stood up and walked back and forth for a while and I could not stop...it was awful. And then finally he sat down and said, "All right, here is the dossier," and the decision was inside it, "if you come up with a better decision in the morning that convinces me, then I will think it over again..."

01:06:04

[image 02:03:07.01]

JvP And with that I could leave. It is not so easy to go away when you can't stop crying, but anyway I left. And I gave it to Kotting and that evening he made a marvellous decision of course, which is easy enough. And I went to The Hague again the next day, to Calmeyer and he had two people with him. And when he saw me he said, "Ah, there is Van Proosdij, let's see what he has been able to do." He was in a very good mood, perhaps he also felt bad about what he had done. He took it and read it and said, "*Ja, ja, so kan es auch,*" and signed it and took the other decision, screwed it up and "woops" into the waste paper basket (gestured throwing it away). And then I was enraged, because it was four people's lives, and I have always held that against him.

01:07:02

[image 02:04:02.16]

JvP It signified that he, if he was in a bad mood, could sentence people to death. Because it was so, if he took his decision, the letter went to the SS the same day and people were picked up before they knew it. On a completely different occasion Miessen could temporarily hold on to them.

IV Yes.

JvP But it is interesting, when he was taken prisoner with all the other Germans after the war and Kotting went to see him one time in the prison and told him that he had a Jewish wife and that we has always deceived him with the cases, then Calmeyer's reaction, and I had never gone to him, "*Ja das kann ich glauben, aber Van Proosdij hat mir niemals betrogen.*" He always believed that I could not deceive him, I was so innocent." (laughs)

01:08:04

[image 02:05:02.06]

JvP He trusted me...

IV Yes.

JvP And I was very nasty...

IV Him too.

JvP But in a way I was his trusted negotiator for contact with Westerbork and that was naturally very important for him.

IV Because what was that?

(cameraman: could we first change the tape?)

IV Yes.

JvP Yes.

01:08:32

[image 02:05:29.04]

File 2

00:00:00

00:00:28

[image 02:06:04.07]

JvP Where were we? Did we just start on Westerbork?

IV We are first going back because there were still a couple of questions that I would like to ask. In the first place about antisemitism or actually your motives in going to help and the antisemitism in Amsterdam, or perhaps the non-antisemitism, but in any case the awareness that Jews were being discriminated against and, something earlier at that time is that the refugees came...

JvP Yes, I noticed that first I think, look here, you don't remember everything that happened 60-70 years ago, and for me it is all 60 years ago, which is really long, so I don't remember so clearly any more and I try...mainly after the war I put it aside, I then afterwards to a degree, with the restoration of rights, I realise I reacted against the whole Jewish issue actually, against those scandalous goings-on...

00:01:36

[image 02:07:09.06]

JvP ...But I set aside more what went on in the war and only say around 20 years later did I become aware again of what happened when I was asked about it...But I cannot remember that I came across antisemitism in the Netherlands except since the war. I did know that there was in Germany, that there was persecution of the Jews, we knew that very well...

IV But did you hear that from the...

JvP You could read it in the paper etc and the fact that the emigrants came was already enough evidence...

IV Yes and then you had it in the Netherlands once it began, actually it began very quickly with the registration of Jews and subsequently you got the placards with "Forbidden for Jews" and also the street scene changed completely of course with Jews wearing a star...Did you get all that? Could you for example...?

00:02:38

[image 02:08:08.19]

JvP To be honest I cannot remember anything, it sounds crazy now, but I was already busy as a student and I helped a bit with visiting some German immigrants and I remember there was the strike of course and we were anti-German, but we were hardly...yes, you were aware that Jews were being mistreated and so on and you were angry about it, yet in any case you could not do anything about it. I remember the strike, remember it very well because after it Amsterdam had to pay a fine, so my

father had to...I don't know what any more but it was a general fine. And what was worse, we had to keep watch for a day or two...

00:03:35

[image 02:09:03.11]

- JvP ...and it was in the cold and I had to stand watch on Museumplein by a large building for unmarried mothers
- IV But did they have to be guarded?
- JvP No, it was to harass us, to put it in basic terms. And the nurses were very friendly, they brought us a plate of hot soup and so on, but I had to stand there in the icy cold for a number of hours...Just like that...to intimidate us I think.
- IV But can you still remember for example in Amsterdam just after the February strike, or yes actually just after, then a ghetto was built, then the Jewish district became where it was placed, it is near...
- JvP I can't remember that. Is that so?
- IV Yes, near the Waag, that whole part by the station...
- JvP I can't remember it, I...
- IV Oh.
- JvP I can almost not imagine that there was a ghetto there, because I thought that you could always go everywhere without more...

00:04:34

[image 02:10:00.02]

- JvP I did know that...Jews should...Look, what I noticed of course, now you ask, is that the professors and suchlike, Jewish professors, had to stand down and the President of the Supreme Court...and...
- IV Who was that again?
- JvP Visser and Cleveringa in Leiden gave that speech and then we held a student assembly about whether we should sign or not and we decided that we definitely should not do so...
- IV In Amsterdam was it?
- JvP It was at the Free University in Amsterdam. And we said, "They can do what they like but we will have nothing to do with it..." So from the beginning we refused to sign, and suchlike...How far that was pro-Jew or anti-German I don't know. Probably it was both, because you were angry yourself when they did such ridiculous things...
- IV Yes.

00:05:33

[image 02:10:57.04]

- JvP So it...I think that the insult to the Jews strengthened our anti-German feeling, I think so...But it is difficult because at the time you don't think about why you do it, if you are against it you are against it. And I was from the start we were all aware of the underground...School friends of mine walked around with a revolver in their pocket, then...It was the first time I saw a revolver. (laughs)
- IV But did you also know for example, did you have an idea of what awaited the Jews after deportation...?

- JvP You heard that they went to Mauthausen if I remember correctly, and, yes of course nothing good awaits you...But more...
IV Really not? Did you hear about it...?
JvP A concentration camp and you heard rumours that some were then dead, rather early...

00:06:34
[image 02:11:55.04]

- Yes, from the start you were...But really knowing it, officially knowing, no...Never, but potentially you were 90 per cent certain...When you see that children and sick people were allegedly set to work in Germany, then you know it is fake...For a Jew (laughs)...You were certain, actually 100 per cent certain...You knew that it was a death sentence. I must have known that already at the start of 1943, when I said to Calmeyer that he was acting like Herod, I didn't pluck that out of the air...
IV Yes.
JvP And he didn't deny it. That he was Herod, but...

00:07:30
[image 02:12:49.06]

- IV (laughs) He worked there where you too had been for a while...at the Binnenhof there...or in any case you were appointed there for the lists...
JvP Yes.
IV Yes, to correct actually or to see or to make them smaller. That's what it actually came down to...
JvP Yes.
IV Can you tell me something about it, about that Binnenhof, because it was a department of BZ?
JvP It was the department of BZ, when you...yes, I don't know from which side...from the tower, from that side, it was the first door on the right...
IV Yes.
JvP And BZ was there and that was at the start of the war it was one or other very rigid minister..A real rigid protestant I should say, because what I remember is that the girls who worked there were not allowed to wear socks but had to wear stockings and suchlike things...

00:08:27
[image 02:13:44.03]

- JvP It was very rigid. But the minister was away of course.
IV He was away...
JvP Yes he was in London...
IV And the Secretary-General was there too?
JvP It was Frederiks, yes...
IV Did you ever meet him?
JvP No.
IV But he was in the same department?
JvP Yes, he was the Secretary-General of BZ and he was also I think the senior secretary-general in general and I also heard from Calmeyer from time to time a bit about Seyss-Inquart and suchlike, what was going on...because he told us, me anyhow, a whole lot

of things, for example that mixed marriages were under threat. And Calmeyer was actively involved in obstructing that. You see the SS tried to have more and more people qualified as Jews so that they could deliver more of them. So at a given moment they came up with the idea, rather early, to pick up mixed marriages too....

00:09:35

[image 02:14:49.03]

- JvP ...and then Calmeyer, who was apparently initially rather in discussion with Wimmer, and it was decided there to leave the mixed marriages in peace...He remembered as soon as the SS began again like that, Calmeyer said "Think about it, this is the arrangement and you must keep to it. We abide by German laws."
- IV Did you talk freely with Calmeyer about...?
- JvP (Nods) He spoke about such things...yes.
- IV Yes.
- JvP And I also remember that one time, when we went on...yes once he had attended a party with SS officers and at the end of the evening he turned out the lights...
- IV He told you that too?
- JvP Yes.. he told me that...And at a given moment about the huns, pointing to...Hitler and suchlike...
- IV (...?)
- JvP Really...

00:10:32

[image 02:15:43.22]

- JvP Really...but at the end of the war he was more pro-German than at the start.
- IV Yes?
- JvP Yes, he was always against...
- IV Yes.
- JvP When it changed, he went over...(laughs)
- IV How did your contact happen exactly? He...Kotting had actually recommended you or had he first put it to you as "Will you do this work?"
- JvP Yes, yes.
- IV And this is a good chance...
- JvP Yes...We saw it as an enormous opportunity to penetrate there.
- IV Yes.
- JvP And it worked splendidly. It wasn't only about...The origin was of course the Portuguese list. But after that short episode I was no longer actually mixed up with the Portuguese actually, it was more a political discussion and suchlike. At lease, I was well aware of course...but there I considered more parentage cases.
- IV Yes.

00:11:33

[image 02:16:42.00]

- JvP Because they came...you see among the Jews the rumour immediately arose that there was apparently something that could be done...So the people came to us there and said, "Can you do something for me?"...And I still remember well, a very plain person, they had heard that you could achieve something with a genealogist...So he came...then we

talked it over a bit, then he said, "Can't you do something with a genealogist?"
(laughs) I remember it well. That was how the rumour went.

IV Yes.. And so you...you had heard it from Kotting, he had said "I would be pleased for you to work there"...you agreed with it. Was that first time you met Calmeyer on that occasion?

JvP Yes yes. Before then I had nothing to do with it.

IV So Kotting came before then probably, at least once before, he probably already...(?)

JvP Yes I knew Calmeyer already and also Nijg.

00:12:27

[image 02:17:33.22]

JvP And I think that Calmeyer, or whether it was first to Nijg or to Kotting and Nijg together or whatever, but those two had seen it as an opportunity.

IV Yes and what was your first impression of him?

JvP Of Calmeyer?

IV Yes.

JvP Well, he was a senior colleague, I should say. He was a peculiar person.

IV But did you find each other a bit lawyers together, was it a sort of...?

JvP Yes, yes it was a bit like that. Although I was a very young lawyer...

IV Yes.

JvP I was 21...then still...So, but it...yes...It went...and personally we clicked. And I, with hindsight perhaps he had paternal feelings, because when he asked me to be the contact with Westerbork in his name, then he looked after me well, I must say.

00:13:26

[image 02:18:30.19]

JvP Then he phoned Westerbork and suggested to the commandant that I should be involved there, which he was glad to do, because he thought it nice. And then he said that he would send someone and then there was the rumour...I think...they confused the SS a bit with whatever it was...there was some anti...there was a bit of homosexual activity, there was some Putsch a few years before the war...

IV (...?)

JvP I have promptly forgotten the name...

IV Röhm.

JvP Röhm, exactly...So he said to him, "Think about it, you cannot touch him" because it actually came down...Not that there was any talk of it, because evidently he had installed his own mistress there.

IV A woman?

JvP Yes, *Fräulein*...I no longer remember what, but she was his secretary...And she did her duty to the *Führer* by providing a child for him.

00:14:28

[image 02:19:30.01]

JvP And one time, but it had a less good outcome...Calmeyer came...Gemmecker's wife came there unexpectedly and he sent her back immediately with the following possibility so that it was just a couple of hours...And then...well, that is another story. Or shall I say it now?

IV Say it.

JvP It is my accusation against Gemmeker. Then there was someone...a German lady, who was there...And apparently she had written it in a letter, that story. And it was revealed by the censor of course, because she was immediately put in the dock...At the same time the youth leader, what was the man called...one of the leading people...

IV Schindler.. (?) Baldur van Schi...

JvP Baldur van Schirach..That's it...

00:15:28

[image 02:20:28.03]

JvP He had said to that woman...she was a widow...and her husband was Dr Baldur van Schirach. Baldur van Schirach had said to Gemmeker, "Can you do something for this lady?" And Gemme...to Seyss-Inquart, yes...And Seyss-Inquart knew no better than to send that letter to Calmeyer and to say, "You do it because you know more about it..." And Calmeyer then asked me what I thought of it, because I knew Gemmeker and he had only telephoned him once and that was all...So I said, "Write to Gemmeker that Seyss-Inquart ordered you to do something for her and ask him if he can do so." And I put the letter in a sealed envelope...I read it of course...and I said "Now I will put it in a sealed envelope and deliver it to Gemmeker..."

00:16:26

[image 02:21:24.02]

JvP And the next time I went to Westerbork I discussed it with Dr Ottenstein...he was the *Einsätzer* [operator] who was head of the *Antragstelle* and who...lovely, impartial, incorruptible, carried out positive work, who was really a good man...I discussed with him what was the best way and he said, "The best is that you give the sealed letter to Gemmeker without knowing what it says, and say 'It is a letter and Calmeyer has asked that it is given to you', so that Gemmeker did not feel that he had to rescue his honour, or whatever...So I gave it to him just like that...And the lady disappeared on the next transport. Immediately, before anyone could do anything, he immediately sent her away. And I wrote an accusation against Gemmeker after the war..."

00:17:26

[image 02:22:21.06]

JvP ...and I heard nothing of it for a few years and when I was in South Africa, the German ambassador phoned, there was a judge now doing research into such cases and was I prepared to be a witness. I spent the whole day with the judge...It was very interesting, because he travelled round the world I should say, to look for such cases and he had been with Ottenstein in New York and with Warel (?), who was also someone in the *Antragstelle*, so I could hear from these people that there were still there...they...And then I told him a story and that evening we...he came home to our place and we spoke further about these things. He talked about that sort of research. Anyhow it emerged that he had been in prison for six years...it is so many years later...I forgot about it...But I thought it was a case of murder...

IV Yes.

00:18:30

[image 02:23:22.19]

JvP You see, Gemmeker was extremely correct. His orders were: "Keep the people in Westerbork quiet and calm" and above all the whole clearance of Jews from the Netherlands, I can say, had to happen as unobtrusively as possible. So in the first place Gemmeker kept Westerbork neat and tidy, discipline, there was no mistreatment as far as possible...people had to feel they were at home in a way. There was a hospital and even a theatre where from time to time...They had outstanding German cabaret artists there, who actually...And I was once invited to come there...It was a small hall and people could...if you got a ticket for it...the Jews could come there, and the front row was reserved for guests and the camp commandant or who else came there,...and I had to go there once as a guest.

00:19:36

[image 02:24:25.20]

JvP ...One was warned in advance that as an Aryan you would never clap a Jew, the Jews could do that, they applauded, but we could, if it was very nice then you could slap your leg from pleasure And that was all you could do. (laughs) But it was an outstanding cabaret. But it was to give the people the feeling that it wasn't so bad, so that everyone would be peaceful. But of course there was great tension over the weekend when the list had to be drawn up, because you see, when you see that you go in cattle trucks...And I saw a little film at the Jewish Museum, there near the Westerbork Museum, how the door was locked. I came, when I came there, I came Tuesday later in the day, but once I saw the train standing..because it had not left yet, but it was really closed...

00:20:31

[image 02:25:18.12]

JvP And then you do know that that cannot end well, if you are in a locked cattle truck...

IV Hmm.

JvP (shrugs shoulders) Once I tried to find out more...When I went there I usually stayed one or two days and then I slept in the service building, there were a couple of guest rooms...And I was there once and at the beginning of the evening I was asked to go and sleep somewhere else, because *Fräulein* Slotke. A very dangerous person from The Hague, who came there to visit and who had to have that room. Then I got a room in the *Grüne Polizei* barracks so that evening I had to drink cognac with the *Grüne Polizei*. What I...the following morning when I had to meet Gemmeker, I had dreadful stomach ache, but I thought, "Perhaps I will hear something"...

00:21:32

[image 02:26:17.03]

JvP But nothing was said about the transports and they boasted the whole time about the *Engelandspiel*; that spies who came from England were picked up immediately...But of course you did not know what was or wasn't true, but they chatted about it, but nothing more. So I never heard it officially...

- IV Oh. I would still like to ask some more about Westerbork...But first, I am going back to that office of Calmeyer, at the Binnenhof, there you first had...together with Calmeyer, you didn't share the office did you? But were on the same floor?
- JvP It was there too...yes everything was on that floor...De Waard and the ladies and so on...
- IV And did you talk to each other as *tu* or *vous*?
- JvP No...at that time everything was still formal...
- IV Yes?
- JvP It was Miss Haring and I don't even know, Miss Appelman and Mr De Waard...and Mr Miessen.
- IV And they were all Dutch who worked there?

00:22:33

[image 02:27:16.08]

- JvP Yes except Miessen and for a while there was a Dr Wander, but he had already gone when I came there.
- IV Yes.
- JvP And Calmeyer's private secretary was also German.
- IV And she sat next to Calmeyer in the room?
- JvP No no no, she sat somewhere else, I never saw her, I had no idea where she was...
- IV And with Calmeyer how did it work, what was your contact like because you just said?
- JvP I could go in to him freely.
- IV Yes.
- JvP which I also did frequently...I could go normally so to speak, I knocked on his door and then went in. And he never said "no". It was a sort of, you couldn't call it friendship, but it was a very pleasant amicable relationship. He trusted me, felt a bit responsible for me...once asked me if I had no difficulties with the *Arbeitseinsatz*...

00:23:31

[image 02:28:11.17]

- JvP ...because you had to have a stamp.. Then I said, "No, I have already settled that" and he accepted that so he understood that I wasn't completely incapable of operating there, but he offered to help me nevertheless. So it was really a sort of friendly relationship...
- IV Yes...and when you came there to make the list smaller...you knew that it would be the work...that you had to do it.
- JvP That is what he requested, to help get the dossiers a bit sorted out, because it was then going much too slowly...
- IV Yes.
- JvP I believe it would take three years before he had seen everything...
- IV How many were there? How many dossiers?
- JvP I don't know any more, but I think that there were somewhere between 600 and 1000 Portuguese people...I think. I know that I had a sub...more than 100, perhaps even 200, I don't know how many, I had collected...But it was a considerable number which would otherwise never have happened...

00:24:34

[image 02:29:12.06]

- JvP But it had, as far as I can check, no influence on people, because they were all dead or transported. Or otherwise protected...
- IV Yes and that was (...?) so did your contact actually begin there?
- JvP Yes and the trust situation was established then. Through it he saw that I could indeed be used.
- IV Yes...
- JvP (laughs) So to speak; he used me.
- IV Yes. And you him too in a particular way.
- JvP Yes absolutely. And I got nice...Anyway, here we come, when you come to Westerbork, and I will tell you then.
- IV Yes, because I still want to...the next question is...after you had done the list of Portuguese, were you subsequently, did you do even more with parentage cases
- JvP Yes.
- IV We have already said a bit about that and it started mostly when someone requested a lawyer "Can you help me?"
- JvP Yes.

00:25:31

[image 02:30:06.13]

- IV And one of the lawyers was then Kotting or you...
- JvP Yes, it came straight to Kotting or me...
- IV And you then made a sort of file with all kinds of papers in it..?
- JvP We looked at what could be done about it...
- IV Whether the registration could be changed..?
- JvP Yes...And mostly it was that you had the proof that someone had an estranged child, or a changeling once emerged...In reality that happened very seldom I believe. One time someone said, "What is it with the Jews that there are so many estranged and particularly changeling children?"...they thought it was crazy. And then I said, "Yes, the difficulty is: in the Netherlands there is no adoption; they cannot adopt and that is why they do it in this way..." That is all I could think of so quickly but they accepted it...

00:26:27

[image 02:31:01.02]

- IV Oh.. And so you had...you looked for all sorts of documents...Did you know...?
- JvP Look here...to a degree the people had to do it themselves of course, we could help them with the assistance of a medical student who did genealogy, who was interested in it...First he could write very well, he had access to birth records books with births, baptism books of churches and also in the official marital status record there was often a half blank page or suchlike and you could write something extra on it. We did that very carefully, with old ink...we also made old documents...And once we tested, we needed letters from the 1800s you see...So we had ink from that time and we had paper from that time, but we wanted to make sure that it was foolproof...

00:27:36

[image 02:32:06.21]

JvP ...and then we have...it was the police expert on forgeries, a certain Van Hulschenbosch or something.

IV Yes.

JvP And then we made an admission of guilt from 1800-and-something on that paper and with that ink. And we sent it to him and said, "We have a case at court at the moment and the clients come with this and before we start we want to make sure that it is genuine." And totally unknowingly he gave a certificate that it was genuine.

IV So then you knew...?

JvP Then we knew that we could use that paper and ink. We were so careful because you have to be careful. And Teutscher could then get birth certificates in that way. We also often came with a court judgement that someone was not a member of the synagogue.

IV Yes, yes.

00:28:35

[image 02:33:03.17]

JvP That was another thing. We could also make divorce orders, we did them well. We worked with old letters, then someone wrote Liesje so and so "The food was delicious last night" or some such; see here, it was a bit more intricate of course. They were actually the principal things, but the people also had to cooperate themselves. And you could alter what are they called, photo albums, which was also wonderful. Yes, all that sort of thing. False baptism certificates, we were good at those too. We could make very pretty ones. Should I talk about the stamp?

IV Yes.

00:29:29

[image 02:33:54.24]

JvP You see, there were a whole lot of churches who were all prepared to give a baptism certificate that was not entirely genuine. And, well, you had to have a bit of variety so we had made paper for other churches which we then used. And then we thought: the Germans like to see stamps. So we designed a stamp from a non-existent Ecumenical Council of Dutch Protestant Churches. That was what it was called, and it did not exist. A lovely stamp with a bit of Latin in it and suchlike. That stamp was placed under all our baptism certificates. And then, a year or so later, when someone from the Jewish Council phone me and told me they had someone with a baptism certificate. And it was not accepted by the Germans because the stamp from the Ecumenical Council was not on it. And they looked everywhere for the Ecumenical Council but could not find it.

00:30:31

[image 02:34:54.13]

JvP Did I know where it was...Then I said, "Yes, I know it well, send it to me and I will sort it out for you." And after that we also stamped the genuine baptism certificates. Alas after the war I could not find it.

IV No...You constantly speak of "we" when you are talking about "we did this and this".

JvP Yes, Kotting and me.

IV You and Kotting?

- JvP Yes, we did those sorts of things together.
IV And there were also contacts with the resistance? Because I remember that Teutscher whom you mentioned, he was also...
JvP He was also a medical student, but he helped with those sorts of things too. Chiefly with genealogy and with false signatures. He could make very good forgeries.
IV Yes.
JvP He was our forgeries man and we gave him that kind... You see I had obtained a certain amount somehow or other and we could finance that sort of thing from it.
IV What were your contacts with the resistance?
JvP I don't know any more.

00:31:31

[image 02:35:52.02]

- JvP It is secret (laughs)... Look, my sister was in the resistance, I had school friends in the resistance, who did not survive unfortunately, my father defended resistance people. Well, you name it.
IV Your mother, was she also in the resistance?
JvP Yes. (laughs) She helped with distribution of false ID cards. We all had something to do with it.
IV Yes.
JvP One of my school friends, no, two of them, were both shot dead. He was among the very earliest resistance people. He was rather early in the war, 42 or so I think... they took him prisoner and he was in prison in Haren and he escaped from there.

00:32:30

[image 02:36:49.03]

- JvP And we heard that and then I... his father was a priest in Nieuwveen, which one of the villages some distance from Amsterdam. Then I went immediately by bicycle to Nieuwveen to warn his father, but first I went to someone else who told me that the Germans had already been there, so I returned empty-handed. I still remember it well, because it was dark at that time and I had ridden straight past some German vehicle or other. But in any case it all went safely and he was free and from time to time came by us. He was one of the founders of the illegal paper *Trouw*.
IV Oh yes.
JvP And shortly before the end of the war, in March or February I think, he came to us one morning. I think drank a bit coffee and chatted and from there he went to the secret office of *Trouw* and the Germans were waiting for him there.

00:33:34

[image 02:37:50.09]

- JvP And then he was shot dead. We had such contacts.
IV Yes.
JvP So if we wanted something from resistance people we could obtain it from different sides...
IV Yes. And Gerbrandy's son, Sjoerd Gerbrandy I believe it is, was he also in the resistance?

- JvP Yes, he is still alive. No, no, he could not do anything with his name actually and the relationship with his father.
- IV Yes, because his father was...
- JvP He was minister-president...
- IV During the war?
- JvP During the war, yes. He was just before the war, a year before the war he became Minister of Justice. First he was a law professor and then he became Minister of Justice, against the wish of his party, actually. He was anti-revolutionary from Colijn. But he was always a bit of a rebel, that is why we could get on well together (laughs)...

00:34:32

[image 02:38:46.07]

- JvP And his wife was too, we were very good friends with them...but he was a unique person. Therefore Sjoerd could not actually do anything. He is still alive, he will be 90 years old this year. He was a bit older than me. And I then had certain things, I took over certain clients from him during the war.
- IV Yes. He was also a lawyer?
- JvP Yes. He was a lawyer with my father, in the office.
- IV Oh. in your father's office on Nassaukade.
- JvP On Nassaukade..
- IV And later in de Lairesestraat or did that change?
- JvP No, no, no, no, father was always there, Van Krimpen was in Jan Luijkstraat I believe.
- IV Vondelstraat.
- JvP Oh Vondelstraat was it, Vondelstraat 30 I believe. And what was it...yes I think it was early 1944 or thereabouts, when Kotting and I left Krimpen and we started in Lairesestraat 62.

00:35:34

[image 02:39:45.15]

- IV Yes.
- JvP And then after *Dolle Dinsdag* or perhaps before it, I am not sure, I no longer went to de Lairesestraat, because you were picked up in the street...
- IV ...raids...
- JvP And then I remained at home...
- IV They were the raids against the work(...?) in order to...
- JvP Yes, and I continued to stay at home and we had built a hiding place there in the attic, but I believe we never used it.
- IV Yes. Good; we now have to try a bit to connect with Calmeyer again. And he subsequently gave you a special commission to go and do something in Westerbork?
- JvP Yes, it was a while later that he, that the Portuguese began, I would say.
- IV Yes.
- JvP Then Calmeyer said, he asked what I thought about it.

00:36:30

[image 02:40:39.22]

- JvP There were a number of Jews declared as non-Jews who looked rather Jewish so there was difficulty with the SS or SD about that. They asked themselves how that could be.

IV Were they Portuguese Jews?

JvP No no, they were ordinary...I mean...among others the chairman of the synagogue at Zandvoort. He was in the telephone book stated like that, he was suddenly declared non-Jewish. That sort of thing happened. In many cases Calmeyer only looked at the documents, not at the people; he did not see them. And there were those who were already in Westerbork, who came out of there again, and that led to a bit of controversy of course among people like Gemmeker and suchlike. And then Calmeyer said, chiefly for his own safety I think, "It is better if it is an applicant already in Westerbork that I receive a report from Gemmeker, who sees him."

00:37:36

[image 02:41:42.18]

JvP ...because if he looks very Jewish then of course you must be careful, then you must have very sound documents.

IV But they were...wait a minute, they were people who were previously set free but were still arrested.

JvP They were already arrested but were already in Westerbork, but were on the Calmeyer list. There was a Calmeyer list...

IV Yes, yes.

JvP ...of people in Westerbork who were not deported because of it. Thus every time when Miss Slottke or whoever had to receive that thousand people, they could not be included. So for Westerbork it was a bit tiresome if they had excess guests...shall we say. (laughs) They could not send them away, and the more the war went on the more awkward it was of course for the list and it was very slowly worked through of course because it went case by case.

00:38:33

[image 02:42:37.09]

JvP Therefore he proposed that he sent dossiers that were ready for decision to Westerbork for a report by Gemmeker and he asked me if I would do that for him.

IV You were in his office by chance or did he phone you?

JvP Well I went there regularly and...

IV You came...

JvP ...and he asked me on one occasion...

IV Yes.

JvP ...what I thought of it and if I was prepared to do it.

IV Yes.

JvP I said, "Why not?"

IV Yes.

JvP Then it went like this: he made a note, a sort of summary of the dossier, it went into the dossier and the first two times Miss Appelman had to come with me to take the dossier.

IV To Westerbork?

JvP Yes, and thereafter I could do it alone. And I went with it to Westerbork and Calmeyer had phoned Gemmeker if he was in favour of it and he was, he thought it very nice.

00:39:35

[image 02:43:37.01]

JvP He regarded himself as capable of judging whether someone was Jewish or not. And I went along with it and then I received...then it went ahead. First I had to introduce myself to Gemmeker and so on...and then I received a letter. I said to Calmeyer, "I must have a letter to say I can travel with German dossiers." So he gave me a letter each month to say that I could travel to Westerbork with dossiers as commissioned by Calmeyer.

IV By train?

JvP Valid for...yes anyway...valid for one month...So I had to have it renewed every month, which I did until almost the end. And when I could no longer travel we made the same letter ourselves, undated, but with a date though not with a monthly limit, and next to the telephone number at the top it said: "Inquiries to *Fräulein Appelman*" so that it was safe.

IV Yes.

00:40:38

[image 02:44:37.19]

JvP I went to Gemmeker, I went by train, was fetched from the platform there by an SS car with two death's head uniforms (makes gesture) and I saw the people go pale in the carriage where I was sitting, because they were thinking "Oh what have we said?" I thought that if they said that after the war I would go to prison too. But in any case I was fetched from there, I then made Gemmeker's acquaintance and he gave me a bedroom there and I then went to the *Antragstelle* to tell Ottenstein which cases I came with. And he had those people come there so that they could say a bit about how it was going. And then the following morning I was with Gemmeker and the people came one by one and he looked at them and I noted down his comments...

00:41:37

[image 02:45:34.04]

IV But did you know before you went to Westerbork, did you know what Westerbork was? Had you ever heard anything about Westerbork?

JvP Yes, yes, yes...

IV It was already understood?

JvP Yes, everyone knew it, because all Jews went there after the raids...

IV Yes but the image that you had made, that you yourself had made, it was about what you had...what did it look like?

JvP It was, it was in the heathland, with iron, a fence around it or some such and also watchtowers with everyone with a rifle...it was guarded by the mil..the Dutch Military Police.

IV Yes.

JvP Well, that was how it was. I was there a month ago now to go and look at it for the first time, but I could not recognise it, because there was no more heath, it was now in the wood. All that they have...they have dealt with that amazingly in any case. But then that was how it was: there were barracks and it was clearly a concentration camp.

IV Yes.

JvP As far as I knew what that was.

00:42:37

[image 02:46:31.09]

- IV But..So you came inside that camp. Where there still very many prisoners then?
- JvP Yes there were always a couple of thousand there.
- IV Yes, and they were?
- JvP And they lived in barracks and there was one barrack which was the *Antragstelle*, where people came who had something for exemption or suchlike.
- IV It was a sort of administration office.
- JvP Something like that. (nods)
- IV Aha.. And where was Gemmeker then, because he...?
- JvP He had his...the general office, I should say...He had a residence just outside the camp...
- IV Did you ever go there?
- JvP I saw it this time, went there...no I had never been there then...but I saw it this time, it was a sort of country villa, empty, without a signboard..And that gave me great pleasure that nothing also...nothing was left of it...nothing!

00:43:36

[image 02:47:28.13]

- JvP but he lived there, probably with his secretary and he had Jewish servants...
- IV Yes yes.
- JvP And then in the mornings when we dealt with the dossiers, then at a given moment a Jewish woman came in with a plate of peeled fruit for him..I got nothing...but that was for him, that was his...yes
- IV Snack.
- JvP Yes, addiction.
- IV Yes...Was that in the villa..? or?
- JvP No his office was in the camp with the secretary's office next door. And in that barrack were one or two bedrooms.
- IV And you slept there?
- JvP I slept there yes.
- IV And when did you go over there...was it in the mornings or..?
- JvP Mostly I took the early train from Centraal Station in Amsterdam to Assen..

00:44:30

[image 02:48:20.13]

- IV Yes.
- JvP And then in Assen I was fetched by the SS.
- IV Because there was also a train that went all the way into the camp, but you never...?
- JvP No I had nothing to do with that...That was a branch line that was only used for that as far as I know.
- IV Yes, and how long did it take to go from Assen to the camp?
- JvP To the camp? By car, half an hour I think.
- IV Yes.
- JvP Something like that, it was not really very far, it was about ten to fifteen kilometres.
- IV It was, it was situated entirely on heathland and you had contact with people. Could you chat to the Jewish prisoners, or?
- JvP Yes, they, if I wanted to see anyone, then I had him come to the *Antragstelle*.

IV But could you also go to the barracks?
JvP No I had never been there.
IV Oh.
JvP Only once after a cabaret performance...beyond that I avoided any contact, naturally I was very careful, because I was not pro-Jewish of course, I came there just technically for Calmeyer.
IV Ah yes, you wanted to create the appearance.
JvP Well...or...

00:45:35

[image 02:49:22.10]

JvP Therefore if I wanted to see anyone I said to Ottenstein that I wanted to see him and he arranged that he came. Thus I met Professor Meijers, I summoned him (laughs)
IV And who is Professor Meijers?
JvP He is...was the best known law professor in the Netherlands.. He worked on the overhaul of the civil law book and in the court reports...in the reports of the court cases...of the appeal court...or how do they call that here...of the Supreme Court...When there was an important case then beneath a note to say why it was important it said "E.E.M.", which was Meijers. So the best...the best legal opinion that you could get is that you could refer someone after an arrest by the Supreme Court with a note by Professor Meijers.

00:46:34

[image 02:50:19.05]

IV So he was a very important man?
JvP He was a very important man but he was in Westerbork, but he was a Barnevelder, he was protected there...and is later too.
IV What is that Barnevelder?
JvP Well there was a Barneveld list, for prominent Jews who were temporarily protected for some reason or other and they were in a camp at Barneveld. A village in the Netherlands And then I think it was in somewhere in 1944 they were brought to Westerbork also highly protected in a way...and finally at the last minute they went to Bergen-Belsen and almost all of them died there. Well Meijers was, it is a crazy story – he was still busy with the constitution, civil law review. He had no books there but he could manage relatively well from out of his head and he was...he did it in a way, together with Professor Cleveringa.

00:47:34

[image 02:51:17.01]

JvP but once when he wanted to send what he had done to Cleveringa, it was, well...
IV Yes, the censor.
JvP ...stopped by the censor. And Gemmeker said, "If those Dutch can't do it without the help of a Jew, then they count for nothing." So it was not possible. And once when I offered to take it for Meijers, because I went with that piece of paper from Calmeyer, so if that I was checked in the train or wherever and they wanted to know what was in my bag, I said, "That doesn't concern you...secret papers". And I often used that if I

saw anywhere that there was a check en route and then I proceeded specifically to practise that I could show boldly enough if it was really necessary. And I always had something on me and I never revealed it, I always said, "Secret German documents".

00:48:40

[image 02:52:20.00]

JvP And the Dutch SS respected that a lot so I could use it later when it really was...when I was not worried about it. I practised it deliberately, it was very nice. So that is why I did that for Meijers, and I asked if I could do anything else for him, bring something, and he said very affectionately, "A sweet for the wife." (laughs) So the next time I brought a sweet for the wife (laughs)...

IV Was his wife also in the camp or?

JvP No she..for.. yes, his wife was in the camp yes, but we took care of the sweet (laughs)...it was very amusing, but good that it is no longer funny...to show the atmosphere. But it was exciting to sort that out with Gemmeker.

IV Yes..

JvP And that is where I think I was able to do the most good things.

00:49:38

[image 02:53:16.08]

JvP Because that memo from Calmeyer, if it was not very positive then I first replaced with a rather more positive ending. And as a result I could once obtain a letter from Gemmeker where he said, "These items look good" while Calmeyer had written, "These perhaps look not so good". And I changed it back again and gave it to Calmeyer like that.

IV But it was...so it was...you were there...you went to...

JvP Gemmeker...

IV To Westerbork...actually for Calmeyer.

JvP Yes.

IV You took a dossier.

JvP Yes.

IV And then you looked at someone with Gemmeker.

JvP Yes, and then I first discussed the dossier a bit with Gemmeker and then Gemmeker looked at the man and then Gemmeker wrote a letter saying that the case appeared good to him or that the person looked non-Jewish or that the person did or did look like someone and such type of comments...

00:50:41

[image 02:54:16.06]

JvP ...and I went back to Calmeyer with it and he took the decision. But I cannot remember, but that says nothing...that it went wrong...ultimately. But I may have shut that out of my memory, I no longer know. I can hardly propose that it all went well, but I can't remember a single case...I can remember one case that almost went wrong, but I can't remember what failed.

IV And which one was that? Which almost went wrong?

JvP Uh...it was the case of a Mr Sinek...a very crazy case. There was a raid in Amsterdam and in the raid the former Jewish secretary of Calmeyer was arrested.

IV From...?
JvP From Germany.

00:51:32
[image 02:55:05.08]

IV He had a secretary in Germany.
JvP Had...and apparently she was in the Netherlands...I don't know exactly, but I heard it. And she then warned Calmeyer and he went to Amsterdam to see if he could do anything for her. But he could not find her. So he was in a rather emotional mood. And he was there, on the platform, or near the synagogue, I don't know where it was, and there he saw a man with a Jewish star who looked totally non-Jewish. A large, neat, correct someone, a certain Sinek. A Czech...and he said to Sinek, "What are you doing here, because you are not a Jew?" and Sinek said, "Yes I have a star" and Calmeyer said, "You must do something about it, because you are not a Jew and you can appeal to change that."

00:52:33
[image 02:56:03.20]

JvP ...and whether Calmeyer then gave my address or he found it in another way I don't know, but in any case he then came to me with that story. His wife and son had been picked up and were in Westerbork, but he had escaped. And then I said, "All right, I shall see what I can do." And the next time I asked Calmeyer about it and he said, "Yes, that man is not a Jew and he must make an appeal." So we made something for that, and we...I know it had to do with a family album with portraits...in the family album there was a portrait of his parents and he appeared to be talking to his father, so we took that portrait out and we had a Jewish friend...I remember him still, Dr Neuberg, who looked very Jewish, almost a caricature of the Jews by the Germans at that time, and we put that in its place.

00:53:39
[image 02:57:06.21]

JvP ...and somewhere at a family party, or with friends or something like that, was the portrait of his real father and it was a friend of his mother...
IV Hmm.
JvP And it was the most important proof in his case. In the end Calmeyer said about the dossier, "That is all right." I said to Calmeyer, "Look, there is a problem, at the moment h is outside Westerbork, so he is safe, but his wife and son are there, but h is prepared to go to Westerbork. But I do not dare to order that unless I know for certain that he will get out again." "No," said Calmeyer, "the case is in order, but it must be referred to Gemmeker of course." Now the difficulty was, if he was in Westerbork, he would immediately be a punishment case so that would first have to...with the Jewish Council. Somehow or other they knew how to disguise that...

00:54:37
[image 02:58:03.10]

JvP ...therefore he went there. And then I went to Gemmeker with the dossier and Sinek came there, neat and correct, in...he was impressively correct, I must say. And Gemmeker looked at him and to my gruesome dismay, Gemmeker looked then he did this (puts his hands over his eyes) and said, "Yes but look, those eyes, they are his father's exactly," meaning Neuberg. And well, you had a couple of corners to his face. But it was exactly like that. He thought he looked exactly like that Jewish gentleman, who for a start was not his father, but also whom he absolutely did not look like. Because we thought those photos were so safe. It could not be otherwise! It was simply a copy of his father. No. So there...

00:55:34

[image 02:58:58.01]

JvP ...then he left and we talked it over for a while with Gemmeker and Gemmeker was really influenced by the man himself but his expertise in physiognomy was such that the mistake appeared to him...it was completely ludicrous. (laughs) But finally Gemmeker said, "All right," and he crossed out the letter so that he said; he thought the dossier not impressive and therefore would not say "yes", but the man was very...I would say militarily correct or some such...I don't recall how he formulated it, but he said something positive about that. I took it to Calmeyer and said, "Look, this is what Gemmeker says, but your saw yourself; Gemmeker is mistaken," because he had seen Sinek fortuitously and advocated to him himself. I said, "And he is there now and his life and that of his wife and child..." and then Gemmeker accepted him.

00:56:41.21]

[image 03:00:02.05]

JvP Sinek was set free, after the war he went to America. He was a...he manufactured ties, but he went to America with his son specially so that he did not have to do military service with the tensions after the war. And he had not been in America for a year before his son had to go into the military to Vietnam. (laughs) But it all turned out well. I had Christmas cards from him for years. It was a nice thing.

IV Yes, but what was it like to see Westerbork? Because it is..everyone...?

JvP Ghastly.

IV Yes, but weren't you seized the whole time by people who wanted something from you, or...?

JvP I had no contact with them.

IV Ah.

00:57:27

[image 03:00:46.00]

JvP No no, they did not come close by, I think.

IV Oh.

JvP I do not know how that was, but I never had further contact with other people except at the *Antragstelle*.

IV And that was Ottenstein, yes?

JvP That was Ottenstein and the people came there. And Wijn (?) who I also knew there, he was a bit less senior I think. And I once met the so-called cognac commission, it was the contact commission but its nickname was the cognac commission, they were four

ex-German Jews I believe, or whatever, but they were...it was said that they were very bribe-able.

IV Yes.

JvP But I had nothing more to do with it.

IV Oh. And Gemmeker. Bettie Hilversum gives a lovely description of him which says, "Gemmeker was a sort of combination, a cross between a hairdresser's assistant and a regular customer in an artists' pub. And he was principally characterised by his awfully stiff walk...it took the whole...". Can you remember anything about him? How...?

JvP (laughs)

00:58:35

[image 03:01:51.20]

JvP All I can say is that he had a marvellous uniform, very well, he had a very good...what do you call the person who makes uniforms?

IV A tailor?

JvP A tailor. A very good, a Hungarian tailor, two Hungarian tailors.

IV Yes, yes.

JvP And he always looked correct and he was very...you had the feeling of a disciplined German officer.

IV Yes, yes.

JvP Apparently he was originally a policeman. And yes, I heard a crazy story about the tailors. Would you like to hear it too?

IV Yes.

JvP It was a certain Landau and Lefkowitz...Hungarian. They made the uniforms for Gemmeker and Aus der Fünten and what is it called, the suits for Slottke.

IV Were they Jews?

JvP Yes and...

00:59:35

[image 03:02:48.22]

JvP There were there of course.

IV OK.

JvP But they were outstanding tailors. On a good day in 1944 it must have been, because I was already with my father, in the office in my father's house, two people came to see me there, Landau and Lefkowitz. I had not met them before. And they came to say that Gemmeker and Aus der Fünten had told them they must come to me to be declared non-Jewish. I knew how to do it. It was not particularly welcome for me, because you don't know what it is. Evidently they were keeping an eye on something or it could just as well have been provocation.

01:00:31

[image 03:03:42.18]

JvP So I said very carefully that I could help them technically by saying how it was done but that was it. I said, "They you must come with documents and say why you are not Jewish, because I don't know that, you have to say that." But Gemmeker and Aus der Fünten would help them. So they came back a second time, they had a document

saying they had to travel so then I made a proposal and discussed it with Calmeyer and said, “ This is our chance to compromise Gemmeker and Aus der Fünten sufficiently that they will never make difficulties any more. Calmeyer looked at the dossier, it was a very weak case of course, and I took it with me to Westerbork...

01:01:35

[image 03:04:44.11]

- JvP ...and gave it to Gemmeker as usual. And Gemmeker said, “Oh yes, I know about this, leave the dossier here and you will get it back next time, I will discuss it with Aus der Fünten first. And when I came next time I got a letter from him and I don’t know now what he wrote in it, except that in any case he found that they were not Jewish. And I went to Calmeyer with it and so they were freed.
- IV Yes. But you...you had actually said to Calmeyer when this case landed on your desk or how you heard about it...then he explained...
- JvP Yes I explained it so. Yes.
- IV But also, “This is our chance to...”?
- JvP Yes, yes, yes. I did not say it exactly like that, but I said to him, “It is an ideal case to do it.”
- IV to...because Aus der Fünten and Lages or Fisscher and Slotje, were all...

01:02:27

[image 03:05:33.22]

- JvP Aus der Fünten was head of organising the picking up of Jews in Amsterdam. He was in command there, under Lages. At the end of the war he was one of the triumvirate, I believe, of the Silbertanner murders who went onto the street in the evenings and shot people dead randomly.
- IV Yes. And Fischer was in charge of it too?
- JvP Yes but he was a sergeant or something like that and Aus der Fünten was one rank above Gemmeker, he was, what we then called...Gemmeker was SS *Oberführer* and he was *Hauptführer*.
- IV Hmm.
- JvP That was the rank of a Captain. And he was one of the prisoners in the Netherlands who had still received a death sentence. Lagers, Aus der Fünten and...
- IV Kotälla.
- JvP Yes, Kotälla, yes. Who was in prison in Breda.
- IV Yes.

01:03:30

[image 03:06:34.16]

- IV And Miss Slottke, she was also an SS woman.
- JvP She was very bad, she was...had a relatively low rank but everyone was terrified of her because in the Party she was obviously...she had very good contacts and she had the last say on who went on the transports. She sent a telex to Westerbork with the list.
- IV Yes.
- JvP And if she was against you, you could forget it.
- IV Yes. So there were two different offices, where Calmeyer was, was another office?
- JvP Calmeyer normally had no contact at all with the SS.

IV And you? Did you ever come into contact with Aus der Fünten or Slottke or?
JvP No.
IV Only Gemmeker?
JvP Only Gemmeker, that was all. Look, Calmeyer also avoided it. The civilian administration and the SS were totally different. The SS tried to pick up as many Jews as possible, the civilian administration tried to keep the country calm.

01:04:31
[image 03:07:33.15]

JvP It is about practicalities and they wanted German Jewish laws to apply here. And the SS wanted to pick up as many Jews as possible, they did not care about the laws.
IV Aha.
JvP That is what it came down to. So normally Calmeyer had no contact with the SS, as far as I know the only contact was with Gemmeker, with whom he only spoke once, and he let everything else go through me.
IV Yes.
JvP Because he preferred to keep his distance. It was also his safety, he thereby kept out of the war. I believe that was an important argument for Calmeyer.
IV That he never had to go to the front, or?
JvP I think. Yes, yes. The difference is that he had a lovely life in The Hague.
IV Yes.
JvP And he was relatively high in that hierarchy.

01:05:27
[image 03:08:26.15]

IV What...we were talking about Westerbork for a bit...what can you remember about it exactly? Because I believe at the start you said something about having once seen a train?
JvP I saw the train once which had not yet left.
IV But when did they depart?
JvP ...but it was very full...
IV Tuesday, was it...?
JvP Yes, it was always on Tuesday.
IV Early in the mornings?
JvP Yes, yes, I would say so. There was no point coming on a Monday, then there was administrative tension and chaos before loading the train and suchlike. You had to come to the train, then there was obvious relief for a few days until the next transport was assembled, then the tension began again.
IV Could you yourself decide when you travelled over there?
JvP I could go when I wanted, yes.
IV But you had even thought...
JvP I thought that I...I cannot remember any more...I think I phoned Gemmeker...or perhaps...it was so, but I don't know any more...
IV Yes.

01:06:32
[image 03:09:29.05]

JvP It is 60 years ago. And it is actually crazy because I try to recall it a bit. One of my dreariest things, rather near the end, I don't know if it was just before the last transport, or whether it was before that, but it was when you could still travel and Calmeyer told me that he had...there were now slowly too few people in Westerbork, it was difficult to get the 1,000 together. And the SS had said they could no longer live with the Calmeyer list in Westerbork. There were too many on it and it had to be cut quickly. I don't know any longer how many how many were on it. I think it was less than a hundred but I do not know that for sure and he then said to me he could arrange to keep half of them...something like that.

01:07:38

[image 03:10:32.08]

JvP But then someone had to decide who was on and who wasn't, so I had to go to Westerbork to decide.

IV And did you want to?

JvP No. But I did it. It was the most awful thing I did, but you...if there are 10 people and someone says "you can have five of them and if you don't do it then all 10 will go", what do you do then? That was actually how it was, there was no other choice. And then I went to the *Antragstelle* and I said to Ottenstein what the situation was and that way we had an opportunity to rescue a number.

01:08:32

[image 03:11:24.04]

JvP or we did nothing. And then we had...we went through the list and then we worked it out a bit more naturally. In other words...I have no idea any more about numbers, but in other words I could have 50, so I took 60, something of that nature. And then we sorted it out together, we looked at which of those people were also on another list and we took them off because they still had a good chance. And I have no idea any more which criteria we used.

01:09:10

[image 03:12:01.11]

File 3

00:00:00

00:01:08

[image 03:13:04.10]

IV Good. Now we had just got to Westerbork and that you had to choose for Calmeyer. It was a very poignant story because there were about 100 people...

JvP About that, yes...

{in the background: 'stop...The previous question please..?'}

IV There were about 100 people there. Where you had to make a decision, about that...a number.

JvP Yes, I try to remember as little as possible but...

IV And did you do it with Ottenstein?

- JvP Yes.
IV You made that decision.
JvP Yes, I had to do it, or...Yes. And then I brought Ottenstein in, or rather I always went there automatically. And told him what had to be done and then we went through the list together to see who came in for comment, if possible to hold on to hope.
IV Yes. And you did not see those people yourself?
JvP We had a few come in to question them a bit.

00:02:11

[image 03:14:05.08]

- JvP But I don't know any more how we decided that.
IV Oh. Did Gemmeker also have anything to do with it or did he not intervene in it?
JvP No, no. That came from Slotke's side or from one of those dreary people and that is all I know.
IV And did the other people then go on the transport?
JvP No idea. I did not know. There was no one I knew slightly or knew anything about, they were just names. And Ottenstein knew a biota out the circumstances and for those we wanted to know more about we had them come in to say how it was going. And chiefly to see if there were other possibilities to keep them without them being on the list so that other people got a chance. That is all that I remember.
IV And afterwards did you go to Calmeyer again and they you provided the list again or?
JvP Yes, then I probably said, "This is it."

00:03:14

[image 03:15:06.01]

- IV Yes.
(someone coughs)
IV In general can you speak about other cases that you defended or looked after?
JvP Yes. You see it was like this. I looked in the dossiers that were still there and if I saw something that would have a good chance when it was referred to Westerbork, then I fetched it out and asked Calmeyer what he thought of it and then I looked at what I could do about it. Afterwards I reflected that they were mostly cases by other lawyers but I never told them, because some of them would then have said, "Stick to your own cases."

00:04:09

[image 03:15:58.13]

- JvP Or something like that. It would have been difficult so that's what I expected but I, in my capacity as an official of Calmeyer, did what I was of course not....and done it that way. There is one of my cases which I think scared each lawyer who heard about it. There was a Miss van Thalinger-Dols (?), a lawyer. And she had a case for a client which was rejected by Calmeyer and she was very angry about it and wanted to take it higher and wrote a letter to Wimmer, who was the boss of Calmeyer's boss, and in it she said that in one of her cases, which was a Kotting case I think. But I don't know any more who it was, Calmeyer had decided favourably and her case was better...

00:05:13

[image 03:16:59.13]

JvP It signified more or less: either my case or you must call back that other one. That is what it came down to, more or less. Wimmer sent it to Seyss-Inquart and Seyss-Inquart sent it to Calmeyer with the comment that what Calmeyer decided was what was decided. So he had the last word. And Calmeyer was furious about this and told us that a case from Van Thalinger-Dols (?) would never again be decided favourably, so to speak. Well he did not say that but that is what it amounted to. Therefore ...and I think he told everyone as a sort of warning: don't meddle in my cases. And he also did not want to clarify why he decided in favour of one and not another.

00:06:15

[image 03:17:59.08]

JvP He said, "I decide with my *Fingerspitzengefühl*, my intuition, is how I would translate it in Dutch. And that is what it came down to actually and it was also unpredictable to a degree. But I hear after the war, although I don't know if it is true, that someone accused her and she deserved it because it was atrocious..."

IV Yes. But you can't do that. You can never go to a higher appeal against a Calmeyer verdict. It was...

JvP No...it was final.

IV First and last.

JvP Yes, he was supported by Seyss-Inquart without more ado. Which was also the safest because otherwise everyone would meddle in it.

IV Yes.

JvP And that is why Calmeyer also did not want to have personal contact with the SS.

IV Yes.

JvP He let that happen via me.

IV Yes.

00:07:11

[image 03:18:52.19]

IV And I don't know...you did also tell me about a case from Kaufmann, can you say something about it?

JvP Yes, er, it was...one day Ottenstein asked if I could do anything for Mr Kaufmann. He was a German Jew who worked at the *Antragstelle* as a porter, I think, or some such.

IV He was...

JvP He was a finance expert.

IV But the German Jew. And Ottenstein was also a German Jew.

JvP Yes.

IV And they were mostly...

JvP He was already in the camp when the war began.

IV Yes.

JvP And they stayed in the camp and thus became, they were in the *Antragstelle*. The whole camp administration, under Gemmeker of course, was in the hand of *Alte Einsatzer*, i.e. people who were already there and who could be trusted that they were German or trusted for other reasons, but they had that in hand. And Kaufmann was employed there in his capacity as a porter.

00:08:14

[image 03:19:54.02]

JvP But Kaufmann was not a German refugee because of course he was sacked at the beginning of the war but he was working for one of the large banks or insurance companies, it was an important organisation. And for him we did a.. something for him, a proposal, and I wanted to have something extra as proof that he was not regarded as Jewish. And I knew that that was the policy of the bank. I don't remember which bank any more. Perhaps it was the *Nederlandse Handelsmaatschappij* or whatever. That it was the policy not to employ any Jews, which often occurred in financial institutions in Europe. I asked the people if they could give me a declaration to support Kaufmann's proposal that normally they would not have employed a Jew, but they had not thought that he was a Jew.

00:09:22

[image 03:20:58.23]

JvP which was ideal. They refused, it was against their policy.

IV And they were Dutch?

JvP They were Dutch. If only they had been others. I thought it very bad that they were not prepared to help someone with such a dumb thing.

IV Yes.

JvP It...I am still angry about it actually, but luckily I don't remember any more who they were. In any case they are dead.

IV Yes, And...

JvP But Kaufmann was freed.

IV He was really freed?

JvP He was freed and was then employed by one of the large banks as a financial adviser. Later I did his naturalisation.

IV That was after the war?

JvP After the war. And then after his naturalisation he moved to Zurich where I was in contact with him. A very sympathetic person.

IV After the war, was it?

JvP After the war, yes.

00:10:19

[image 03:21:53.18]

IV And I also wondered, was it also actually possible for people like Gemmeker or Calmeyer or one of their colleagues like De Waard or one of the secretaries to be bribed? You once said you sometimes took or you once went to eat with one of the girls.

JvP The only one who was bribed, as you call it, was Miss Appelman. She was paid. But one did go out to eat with the other girls. Right next to the Binnenhof was restaurant Lensvelt Nicola. It was known that you could eat black market things there, in other words. You could get anything there. So we took someone there. It was really delicious.

00:11:07

[image 03:22:39.18]

JvP One time Arie de Vroe. I believe I have already mentioned him in connection with the shooting of Por. We had him in another case, we wanted to take him to Calmeyer so that he could also plead there. And that man did so much good; he also did not have a pleasant time in the war of course. I once took him with me when we first when to lunch at Lensvelt Nicola. And I could see that he was famished, and he ordered oysters and something else. And finally, while he was still able to go on eating for a while, I went straight to Calmeyer and he came a bit later. But that was comparatively easy. And luckily we had money for that. And it was also useful because you have to do something like that for someone.

00:12:00

[image 03:23:30.12]

IV Yes...

JvP But on one occasion it was a very important Dutch person. He was, I think, managing director of a large insurance company or something. He wanted to discuss a case with me and he took me out very properly to De Witte which was the most expensive club in The Hague. He took me to eat there and I think my meal consisted of a very small piece of some vol-au-vent on a very large plate. Because they were not black market and you got nothing there for a huge amount of money. And I thought that was quite typical for one of the rich bosses or suchlike.

IV But he was no Jewish, because then you could not.

JvP No, no he was just an important director of an important company. But I still remember that so well, because we could do so much better. (laughs)

IV And the money you got from the resistance, that all came via different people. Because you said...

JvP I have no idea, I can't remember. I once got pressed into my hand...

00:13:10

[image 03:24:38.07]

JvP without asking anything. Like this: here is 10,000 guilders, you could do with it. And that was all.

IV And then you used it to make stamps.

JvP Yes, we had to support Teutscher a bit from time to time because he was poor and Miss Appelman and our train tickets and other things, but in any case we used it well.

IV Did you do anything for Jews in other ways or was it chiefly this parentage work or when people came to the office for example and you spoke with them did you sometimes give them money if the situation was very dismal, or was it?

JvP I don't believe we ever gave out money. For a while we did have a person in hiding at home, but never for long, because it was too dangerous.

00:14:03

[image 03:25:28.07]

JvP You see you have to separate out the different things because if you were caught by one, others are at risk. And I know my subsequent brother in law who was head of the security service. Sometime around the end of the war he asked me if they could use

my office in de Lairesestraat, which I still had, for meetings. And I thought about it carefully and said, "No".

IV Was he in another resistance organisation?

JvP It is too dangerous. Yes, he was with espionage I should say. I said "no" because if something goes wrong with them then a hundred Jews have had it too. Then the other unrelated things that have nothing to do with it also get involved. Fortunate that I said "no"; a month later they had another meeting place; then the whole lot were hunted down.

00:15:01

[image 03:26:24.08]

IV Oh.

JvP And otherwise it would have been at our place. You have to have as little contact as possible. You must have contact if you need help and then you can get somewhere. I did do something for them once, but I did it myself, but that had nothing to do with the rest.

IV It was for a young man of 21 yet a lot of work eh? It was a great responsibility for what you all did.

JvP Yes but that is the start of illegal work; no cells. And Kotting and I worked together and my father also did not know exactly what I was doing and did not know what he was doing and I also did not know what my sister was doing. At the start I knew what I could not give further information about. And vice versa as well.

IV And your contact with Kotting was also at home?

JvP Yes, yes. We were very friendly.

IV But was his wife a Jewish woman?

JvP Yes.

IV Did she wear a star?

JvP Yes, she wore a star.

00:16:04

[image 03:27:24.24]

IV But she came...

JvP It was a mixed marriage.

IV But did she never go outside?

JvP Yes, she did go outside, it could not be otherwise, she would have done the shopping and so on. But there was a certain danger as long as you had a star, of course. You could always encounter difficulties, but that was the risk that she came up against.

IV And had you... Had you also heard about the performances that people in hiding gave at concerts?

JvP (laughs) Yes we had concerts at home regularly. I am waiting for the name...Gesar Fried (?) was lead cellist of the Concertgebouw orchestra but he was a Jew so he was dismissed so therefore we arranged concerts at home. We did that sort of thing a bit.

IV Yes .And was it you and Kotting who did that?

00:17:04

[image 03:28:22.11]

IV ...or at home at your parents' home..?

JvP Yes, yes at someone's home. I don't remember exactly, it is all so long ago. You don't remember what happened 60 years ago. (laughs) You can't.

IV (...?) So then in that way you had contact with people.

JvP Yes there was that kind of thing. And at the end of the war for a while we had formed a little group to chat about what had to happen after the war. How the restitution had to go and suchlike. And I think Bregstein took the initiative and Kottling and I and the paediatrician were involved in it and perhaps a couple of other people. I don't recall. It was very, it was very informal, just to help ourselves a bit because we knew that after the war naturally we had to get on with it immediately.

IV Yes.

00:18:02

[image 03:29:18.07]

JvP And of course I had many restitution cases. The first...do you want to know something about it or is that not actually about the war?

IV Yes. No. I would like to ask something about it, but I. No, tell me...

JvP Oh. Just before the end of the war I had a client, as certain Alkan, and he had a textile business but that had been sold in the war of course, to a Dutch woman who was married to a German so she had German nationality. And for him it was important to get the business back in his hands again as fast as possible.

IV He was Jewish?

JvP Alkan was Jewish, yes; it was sold to the Germans as a Jewish business. And now there was a rule in the law that if you, if a case received a due amount, had to get it from a foreigner, then you could take him hostage.

00:19:07

[image 03:30:20.15]

JvP So that he could not flee, so that you are (...?) had. So I established an appeal request to the president of the judges to seize this woman. And I went with it to the president of the judges at home because you could...there was no longer much court. He was a very agreeable man who decided something immediately, you did not have to harp on. On the other hand it sometimes took two, three days for a short litigation but then he was someone who decided immediately. He said, "Mr van Proosdij, is all in order?" He read half of it. I said, "Yes Mr President." He signed it and I had it. And then on liberation day I got the bailiff and went with him and they had a bicycle with a cart attached that you could lock, in order to arrest people.

00:20:08

[image 03:31:19.09]

JvP And we went there, to the...it was somewhere in Amsterdam-Zuid. We rang the doorbell and the door opened a crack and then the woman saw what was going on and tried to close it but the bailiff realised this and already had his foot inside and we said that she was now under arrest and she first had to put her clothes on. We allowed that and she used the opportunity to give her jewellery to the woman next door over the balcony. We found it later. We seized it all. Then we took her away with us and put her in the detention centre, lovely. And Alkan could just go to the office and take over the business. Then after a month or so I got a telephone call from another lawyer, it

was eleven o'clock in the morning, to say that at twelve of clock he would be with the president of the judges.

00:21:12

[image 03:32:20.07]

JvP ...to appeal that she be set free immediately because there was an agreement between the Netherlands and Germany whereby the hostage procedure had been dissolved. I quickly looked it up and then found an arrest by the Supreme Court with a note underneath by E.E.N. from someone in 1942 I think, and he wanted to go to court with free legal aid, and the matter of the agreement was discussed and then the Supreme Court decided that the agreement was dissolved by the declaration of war. So I packed up the bundle with these statements in my case and went to the president of the judges. And the RP [*rechterpresident*, i.e. president of the judges] was apparently, he was not aware of it of course and was angry with me that I had said that it was in order.

00:22:14

[image 03:33:20.12]

JvP ...and he said, "Mr van Proosdij, so and so, what do you have to say about it?" I said, "Mr President, it is a known fact!", I did not know it before, "It is a known fact that there is an arrest by the Supreme Court with a note by Professor Meijer...". And I set it out and read it and he was angry at the other lawyer for having startled him and he said, "Mr Vosselman", I still remember his name, "the appeal is rejected." Then Vosselman said, "Yes, but there is actually another important argument, there is no due amount." He said, "Mr Vosselman, you have had your chance, it is dismissed on appeal." He stayed there. Then it went to appeal at the Higher Court and I knew that I didn't stand a chance there so I said something or other, but it was rejected on accelerated judgement.

00:23:16

[image 03:34:19.20]

JvP then that "I'll be..."

IV And so she was then set free in fact.

JvP Yes, she thought so. Then I had her arrested immediately on other grounds.. (laughs)
Among all these illegal contacts there was a certain Professor Coops. He was a professor of chemistry and suchlike. And at the same time he was a bit of a contact man of my sister for espionage. For a time in the war he had been picked up and suchlike. They are all complicated stories. But in any case, after the war he was immediately appointed head of, I don't remember what they called it, but he could have all collaborators arrested. So I phoned him and said, "Uncle Jan, so and so is a horrid woman who is a German and suchlike." And then he (a successful order had been obtained that she had to be set free again), "couldn't you immediately..." "Yes of course," he said. The moment she came out she was arrested again.

00:24:22

[image 03:35:22.15]

JvP and was inside for quite a time again. Yes, it is a crazy story. A year later, meanwhile I had become a manager. Then you could become manager of enemy property. And I was appointed the manager of the enemy property of this husband and wife. But in any case of this German man. Then Mr Vosselman began a divorce whereby she requested a divorce from her husband and then she would become Dutch again. I pursued that defence as manager of the husband and I said, "I oppose this divorce," and so she had to stay put.

00:25:12

[image 03:36:10.21]

JvP And then, I was already in South Africa, in 1952 I think, my father sent me an arrest in the case of, I don't remember her name, it was in the name of J. Van Proosdij qq as manager of the husband, whereby the Supreme Court said, quite justifiably, that as a manager of someone's property I had nothing to do with his divorce, so all that time it had been invalid. But I was well aware of that, but I couldn't care less, it had been my aim to keep her in prison for as long as possible. So in the end she was free again.

IV In the end you succeeded in keeping her in prison for 7 years.

JvP I don't know precisely how long but in any case long enough that she could not give me trouble.

IV No.

JvP (laughs) Actually nasty, but it is a sort of revenge and I cannot help that because I was very angry about that sort of thing and later on I once misbehaved, it was very nice actually.

00:26:10

[image 03:37:06.12]

JvP There was a council for restitution where you could declare Jewish sales invalid. And we. And that was important because a whole lot of Jews had their houses sold I went to the president of the judges.

IV Was it during the war or was it sold..?

JvP Sold by the Germans to non-Jews who then had such a house. In order to get that back now. This Council for Restitution was still not working properly. But I had this law that they had made in London which we did not yet know, I had got it from Gerbrandy. I had asked him because I knew from him what we could do. Then he gave me a copy of this law

IV He was minister-president who was then in exile in London.

JvP Yes, yes. And meanwhile he was also in the Netherlands, I will tell you how he came there. But in each case I had the law and so I said to the president of the judges, "Now you know there is such a law." No, he did not know that. "You are welcome to borrow it from me."

00:27:14

[image 03:38:07.20]

JvP (laughs) and there you could just get summary proceedings, you went to him and then you got your house back in a day, in a manner of speaking.

IV Yes.

JvP It was unique and I did a whole lot there and once it was like that against a rather clever Dutch lady, neat and tidy and she came and said, "Yes, but I bought it and I paid for it." I said, "Madam, you stole it." (laughs) I said, "It is illegal, but what concerns me is that you stole it. You are a thief." She was furiously angry but of course she had no chance. And when she left I gave her a hand, and she said, "But Mr van Proosdij, you say that I am a thief; do you then give me a hand?" I said, "Madam, I am a lawyer. If I have a client or someone else and he is a murderer, I also give him a hand." (laughs) I was nasty at that time, but that is how I felt. And now I still feel it, I was very angry about it.

00:28:17

[image 03:39:08.12]

IV About what had happened?
JvP Yes.
IV But that was all after the war?
JvP It was after the war, of course, yes.
IV Yes. But when did you know about... You already described earlier on that you knew what happened to Jews or that you had a suspicion that they had gone to their deaths, but how... You only knew it for real when you heard the reports from Auschwitz probably.
JvP Yes, before then you were actually practically certain nevertheless though.
IV Yes?
JvP Yes, let me put it like this. When I already said relatively early to Calmeyer that he was like Herod...
IV Yes.
JvP ...then I said, "you kill them." And he did not recognise that. After the war he acknowledged that he had known that all that time. You probably saw it from among all those interrogations. And it was never officially said but you went on from there.
IV But you thought that the Germans were capable of it?

00:29:15

[image 03:40:04.17]

JvP Yes. If you are capable of turning out a whole hospital and putting all the sick and everyone in cattle trucks for three days long to Poland or wherever to work, then you know it is not true.
IV And you saw that that happened?
JvP Yes, yes, you knew it, it was more or less generally known.
IV Oh. And you had been in Westerbork of course and you had been (incomprehensible).
JvP I had even seen that train once. Yes, yes, yes. No, that yes I did not actually know it. But actually you noted the reality after the war when you saw the photos, then you could see it. You knew that they had all been killed, but not how gruesome it was.
IV Yes.
JvP And I do not go to films about it.

00:30:14

[image 03:41:00.12]

IV No.

- JvP Because it is partly people who you have known and...
IV But you just went to Westerbork.
JvP Just now, just now. How many years later? Sixty years later. (laughs)
IV Yes.
JvP And for years I did not go to Germany and it is always a little bit...When I was in South Africa, because I could speak German well, the German Embassy sent clients to me, German clients. And then you speak in German and he says, "Oh, are you German?" I say, "No I am Dutch." "Oh, I have also been to Holland." I had enough of it, but then when you leave he says, "*Tot ziens*". Still just that Hitler salute. And then I let the embassy understand that I was no to be used for that.
IV Yes.

00:31:13
[image 03:41:57.13]

- JvP No. Good that I have nothing against them any more, but...
IV But that restitution began soon after liberation?
JvP As far as I was concerned on liberation day. It was the first right that I restored.
IV But there is a lot of anger in that. In my view you have a lot of regret at least if you...
JvP Indeed there was a certain angry reaction in me. Later the Jewish, it was an international association of Jewish judges and suchlike, they asked me to say something about the war and instead of that I spoke about restitution, I preferred that.
IV Yes.
JvP And that was nice.

00:32:03
[image 03:42:45.02]

- IV It was houses or also other..?
JvP It was houses, businesses. I got a whole life insurance business to turn round, very intricate because it was about interest percentages of a 32nd and something like that, but that could easily be a million if it was about big businesses. And there were relatively big businesses present.
IV Yes.
JvP And then I was also the manager of a German bank and I did very crazy things there. In a way that was a problem for me. I had ordinary litigation experience; there I had no experience; but of course I knew more about restitution than most others, so you came up against experienced lawyers, and there was I, who knew more than they did, because they thought in another kind of law to me. It was quite crazy, but it was also nice.

00:33:08
[image 03:43:47.13]

- IV But what...you knew more about restitution?
JvP Yes.
IV Yes.
JvP And I could imagine more why it was so and they thought in another kind of law of course. It was nice. And it was also before a special court, I should say.
IV Another?

JvP Yes it did not go to the ordinary court it went before the Council for Restitution. It was a kind of special court and I once had a case there about insurance and it came before three professors and then you squeeze them a bit of course, but it was also interesting.

IV Hmm.

JvP Yes, there you learn other things and in one case, it was about a large business, and the lawyer on the other side was a well known lawyer who appeared for insurance companies...

00:34:08

[image 03:44:45.03]

JvP ...and it came before three professors and you squeeze them. And they asked me constantly difficult questions and I had a fair chance with a part of the business that we demanded, but it actually concerned enemy property more than restitution. But it was still about restitution. I had not much chance on one part of it but I had a reasonable chance on the other. But they asked barely hostile questions the whole time and when we came out he said, "You have definitely lost that one." I said, "I think so." And then later came the verdict and I actually got more than I thought I should. (laughs) It was an entirely new kind of law.

IV But how did people come to you again? Were they often former clients for whom you had done parentage cases, or?

00:35:01

[image 03:45:36.16]

JvP Yes, that case was from Peretz, a dealer in Persian carpets and he came via a friend of mine; his father in law had formerly been consul general in Turkey or something like that. They were crazy, crazy cases and eventually you became known for doing things for them.

IV And did Kotting do that too, or were you...?

JvP No, Kotting did it too.

IV Aha.

JvP Yes both of us did it. But my practice grew very fast with that but I wouldn't say it was in a wrong direction, but not the normal direction. (laughs) And I wouldn't say that I was not very competent and experienced for ordinary cases, and that made it somewhat easier for me to emigrate.

00:35:58

[image 03:46:30.24]

IV But why did you actually emigrate?

JvP Yes that is (laughs), everyone asks that. There were two reasons. One was that I thought that I needed a new challenge. And the other was that it was the time of the Berlin crisis and so on, a threat from the East continued. And the third reason was that my wife's family had considerable connections with South Africa.

IV But you...?

JvP And then in 1951 I went there.

IV But your wife, because you married after the war.

JvP Yes.

IV But she wasn't South African?

JvP No, no, she was Dutch but her father was chairman of the Dutch South African Association and her grandfather was from the time of Paul Kruger, her one grandfather was head of the South African Railway and her other grandfather was Governor-General of Indonesia.

IV Hmm.

JvP (laughs). So it was a very different kind. But through these connections I went to South Africa.

00:37:03

03:47:33.14]

JvP Where it seemed when I was there that I had to study about everything, but where I have never had trouble.

IV Yes. But the threat you speak of, the threat from the East, do you mean the Russians, the Soviet...?

JvP Yes, yes, it was the time of the Berlin siege or whatever you want to call it.

IV Yes. But were you afraid of another occupation? Had you had enough of Europe?

JvP I had had enough of war in any case. And it is a beautiful country if you have ever been there, there were difficulties of course, but...

IV Yes but it was also so...because at a certain point was the restitution a bit over?

JvP It was not yet over when I went, but it would have been a dead end of course.

IV Yes.

JvP I do not know much about how it went afterwards, but Kotting then became the manager of the German bank in my place, and suchlike. He went on with it.

IV Yes.

00:38:04

[image 03:48:32.01]

IV But what...

JvP It was a difficult parting from the Netherlands and a difficult parting from Kotting because we were very good friends with each other. We trusted each other like a married couple, in a manner of speaking. That sounds crazy, because it was nothing of the sort. No, we were very good friends. His wife died two months ago and he was ten years older than me

IV And yet you went away?

JvP Yes. With tears in my eyes. Literally.

IV Yes. I would like to ask something more about restitution because you said yourself, "I was talking about anger" and you were talking about revenge. Where exactly were you so angry, about what?

00:39:01

[image 03:49:26.14]

JvP About the whole mistreatment of the Jews, I would say.

IV But you were able to help a great many, you had already done a great deal.

JvP Yes, but I was angry about what was done to the Jews, I would say. The murder and the theft.

IV Yes. And now you were on the other side and you could...

- JvP Yes; oh and a very nice case of restitution: naturally you could demand the return of all the things that you could find which were taken from you. I had a client Morpurgot (?), he was a well known art dealer in Amsterdam at the corner of Rokin and Spui.
- IV Wasn't he Portuguese?
- JvP Yes, he had a Portuguese name but he was a very expert art dealer, chiefly in old silver and Chinese...old Chinese plates and things like that.

00:39:58

[image 03:50:22.00]

- JvP And old glass and suchlike. And at the beginning of the war his business was confiscated and then the whole stock was auctioned by Mak van Waay, which is now Sotheby. We got hold of the auction catalogue and we went through it and said, "Which things shall we try to trace again? To see who sold it, and so on." On the outside page was a splendid Chinese plate, it was the top piece in the auction. I said, "Naturally we must have that, in any case..." "No," he said, "wait, we must ask about the provenance." Then you only get a percentage but he said, "Then I will be entirely pleased." I said "Why" if it is a forgery...which is what happened. He had thrown the plate in the attic because he saw that it was a forgery. The Germans had found it there and thought that it had been hidden. Apparently Mak van Waay did not know enough about it. (laughs)

00:41:06

[image 03:51:26.22]

- JvP It was (...?) Ah, you can get crazy things.
- IV Yes.
- JvP But he was. He had survived it. He had gone to Theresienstadt with the Portuguese. He says, "It is very good to be able to be a hairdresser because that is always needed, so that is a first chance for survival." And after that he painted miniatures for the camp commandant and that way he survived.
- IV Yes.
- JvP Interesting, eh?
- IV Yes, but also very nice indeed to see that again after the war.
- JvP Yes. Of course.
- IV Because it strikes me that you saw quite a lot of your former clients again.
- JvP Yes, most did not seek you any more afterwards.
- IV No?
- JvP No.

00:42:03

[image 03:52:21.16]

- JvP No. There were a few who kept in contact like Sinek and Kaufmann and Perreira and Marian Hendriks, whom I only discovered much later, thanks to the television. About a year after the war, or at some time not so long afterwards I drew up a list of the names that I remembered whom we had Aryanised. It said Appelboom or Levi 4, which meant four people, and so on in that way. And I underlined the ones I had done alone; those I had done with Kotting had a dotted line and the others without underlining were by Kotting alone.

00:42:59

[image 03:53:15.01]

JvP The names I then remembered. I found that list again twenty or thirty years later, it was on a piece of paper and when I read it I could not remember more than half the names. One of them was Hendriks 1 and I knew, I had no idea who that was. I was here a number of years ago and when I was at the Central Archives in The Hague, because they wanted to make something for television, and I had access there to the dossiers, and I looked for a number that I thought were interesting such as Landau and Lefkowitz, which I would be glad to see again and another few like that. But I found little. In any case Hendriks 1 was not there.

00:44:00

[image 03:54:13.21]

JvP Then a year later I think, or something like that, there was a programme in the Netherlands about this case and they had found out who Hendriks 1 was. It was a child of 3 or 4, I think, who was blond, whom I would have fetched out of Westerbork. I can't remember anything about it now. But in any case we had contact with each other then, and the television had found that out and she had therefore heard my name, because as a child she also knew nothing about it. It was quite a heart-warming story. She had two little brothers and her parents and they were in Westerbork and her parents had decided that they probably would not survive in such a camp there, of course they did not know what happened there.

00:44:54

[image 03:55:05.23]

JvP And that it was better that they. Then an acquaintance of theirs, a lawyer, I believe, from Amsterdam, wrote a splendid letter. She herself was blond and in the letter he said that he was formerly a friend of her mother but he had been away for a time when she married and he later came into in contact with her again and then they had a relationship and from that she was born. And they had always been silent about it because of the scandal. It was a splendid letter, I was convinced that it was true when I read it, as she was too. But of course it was not true at all. And that he, now she was in Westerbork, he thought that it was his moral duty to do something about it. She then went to Calmeyer, er, to Gemmeker and Gemmeker wrote a letter saying that he agreed that she was not Jewish.

00:46:03

[image 03:56:11.12]

JvP and she. So Marian Willemsen now. She had been able to obtain from someone a copy of Gemmeker's decision. And at the bottom, beneath Calmeyer's signature it said "Authorized; van Proosdij should handle further" So for me the evidence that I had done it although I cannot remember anything about it now.

IV Yes, that is...

JvP But we are very good friends now. But very interesting because I feel like a sort of half father to her.

IV Yes. But what is it like to see these people again?
JvP It is terribly emotional.
IV Yes.
JvP And it is very...at the same time a bit uncanny.
IV How so?
JvP Think of it if you had saved my life and that all of a sudden you see me.
IV Yes.
JvP It is a difficult situation because what must you say to such a person?

00:47:04

[image 03:57:10.19]

JvP Send such a person a bill? You cannot do that?
IV Yes.
JvP A life saved, 100 guilders. Cannot. And how do you thank such a person? Actually you cannot thank them. It is a difficult situation. It is a very difficult thing. And you can't imagine it. Yes. Not even after 60 years.
IV No. It. I...You told me in an earlier conversation that the tailor...
JvP Landau Lefkowitz...didn't I tell it?
IV ...did thank you in another way after the war.
JvP Oh. (laughs) No, during the war, during the war.
IV During the war.
JvP During the war.

00:47:59

[image 03:58:03.16]

JvP They were friends with a mixed marriage couple and the wife of that couple was Viennese, a non-Jewish woman. And when they were saved they afterwards invited me for a meal at the lady's. That was shortly before the end of the war, really short, when it was very difficult to get anything. And she was an outstanding Viennese cook, as the Viennese women are, no reflection on the present day, but it was a splendid meal and it was very nice. And then a while after the war, two or three months after the war, she was arrested on account of collaboration, because an important German had visited her for whom she had collected food from all kinds of people. And that was me. (laughs)

00:49:05

[image 03:59:06.07]

JvP That can happen. People do not know any better and apparently she had put the food together in that way.
IV Yes.
JvP So then I phoned Jan, Professor Koops, and said what had happened and of course she was set free immediately. But then I thought, if I travel by train to Westerbork, to Assen, then I was in a carriage such as the trains had then, with six or eight, or suchlike. And there I was, it took two or three hours. And some of the people usually chatted with each other, which I never would have done in the war, certainly not, because naturally everyone can hear. And then the train stands at the platform at Assen, now coming outside the station building and there is a car waiting with two SS

men coming from it, with the death's head caps on, and I walk towards it and then I am collected properly.

00:50:10

[image 04:00:08.24]

JvP Then you think, "What must the people have thought when they saw that?" Then they think, "Oh what did I say, there was an SS man there."

IV Yes.

JvP But of course they did not know who I was, it was all right, but...

IV Yes. After the war Calmeyer was in prison in Scheveningen for almost two years. You never went to see him.

JvP No.

IV But why not? Because Kotting did so.

JvP Kotting did so, and he told him that we had deceived him and all Calmeyer's reaction was that he could well imagine it from him, but Van Proosdij never deceived me. Then I thought I was not summoned to go there, nevertheless.

00:51:01

[image 04:00:57.16]

JvP Or it was because I was not ashamed of what I had done, but I had no wish to see him again actually because I always thought it not nice. And I knew...I had written a piece about it when they asked me. And I came to the conclusion that we had better not encounter someone actually. But he was not someone who specifically tried to save as many people as possible. With him it depended partly on him keeping his job there of course, but apart from that he did find it interesting and in general he was sympathetic towards the Jews, but not to the extent that he tried to avoid it at all costs.

00:52:04

[image 04:01:58.02]

JvP And in a bad mood he could sentence someone to death, disqualified a family of four people...

IV Aha.

JvP That is always so. And I have had a difference of opinion about it unfortunately. Calmeyer was recognised by Yad Vashem relatively early. Mr Michman was still the head then, I know, and we corresponded and he asked me for my opinion about Kotting, Teutscher and he named a number of others including Calmeyer. And I said what I thought about each of them. I said, "Nijg was good, Teutscher was good, Kotting was the best, but I have written that Calmeyer had a stain against his name from that specific case and perhaps more that I don't know."

00:53:05

[image 04:02:57.01]

JvP I knew that naturally he could not help everyone because then he would have helped no one, then it would have gone wrong, but in that case apparently he could help but because of his mood he did not do it. And I therefore thought that he was disqualified. But he had already received it by then. But I did not want to have a row with Mr

Michman because he had the best intentions, and he did not know that of course because he did not know them. But he wrote back to me, "Not, it has to be..." he could not go back of course. It could not be otherwise. Because when someone saved a Jew he saved the world of course. And then I wrote back to him and I said, "Then you must give both Gemmeker and Aus der Füntén Yad Vashem recognition because they saved two people.

00:53:57

[image 04:03:46.23]

JvP He did not reply to that and I did not go on with it any more. I tried not to mention it and not to name Calmeyer any more. And then at some time I received such a Yad Vashem recognition and then I had to say something and then the Israeli ambassador asked me to try not to name Calmeyer. Therefore if I ever had to speak somewhere I always said, "A German official". And once accidentally I said "Calmeyer" and now I can name him freely, because I have now also, *Der Spiegel* had written something about what I thought of it.

IV Yes.

JvP But now he is already dead.

IV Yes.

JvP And I don't want to criticise Yad Vashem too much, they cannot do much about it of course. And I think they do splendid work.

00:55:01

[image 04:04:48.02]

JvP And they have an unbelievably beautiful children's monument there in Jerusalem. Have you seen it? (...?) terribly beautiful.

IV Yes..

JvP And I am always pro-Jewish and even pro-Israel although I do not always agree with them, but luckily that doesn't matter. But I am always pro-Jewish and if anyone says anything negative then I say, "Speaking honestly I trust them more than the non-Jews" and that is still true. (laughs)

IV Yes. But it was not the move to South Africa, but perhaps that is the image that I have as a post-war person. South Africa was just also such a terribly racially segregated society, was then.

JvP Black and white, yes.

IV Therefore when you tried to do very much for the Jews in the Netherlands, that you then in South Africa... Was it difficult or did you see no, did you not see it as...

JvP I did not like the racial segregation.

00:56:04

[image 04:05:49.01]

IV No.

JvP And as regards that, I am very thankful that it is now abolished. I do not believe that the black government always does good. And racial hatred still remains of course and also a bit of revenge on the black side without doubt. Which I can even imagine too. But you can at least go about normally again with each other and that is very agreeable.

IV Yes.
JvP The only thing that I, now I am going to say something ugly about the Dutch.
IV Yes.
JvP We are always allowed to go to the Netherlands without a visa.
IV Is that so?
JvP As South Africans you do not need a visa. But when we finally had done what the Netherlands wanted and got the black government, from then on we had to obtain a visa, because they did not want to have all the blacks just like that. (laughs)

00:57:01

[image 04:06:43.20]

IV That is..
JvP Ugly, eh? But it is mean to say so. (laughs)
IV Yes. (laughs)
JvP And I have one. Ultimately there was a government bill at a given moment under which you could get your Dutch nationality back, but it was amended by the Eerste Kamer. So now I have South African nationality.
IV You don't have double nationality?
JvP No, it is not allowed. And I cannot practise there unless I am South African.
IV Yes.
JvP So after I had taken my oath in favour of the Dutch queen and in favour of the English queen and again in favour of I don't know who, I am still always South African.
IV Yes, yes.
JvP With each oath I have to swear that I will be faithful. So I am faithful to Wilhelmina.
IV (laughs)
JvP Yes that oath, it is actually a bit of nonsense.
IV Yes.

00:57:59

[image 04:07:39.17]

IV I had one more question I think. Yes, I had already earlier asked about contact with the people that you saw again after the war.
JvP Yes.
IV You told me about the sons of Bregstein whom you had seen. Can you say something more about that?
JvP Yes, have I told you the story about Bregstein?
IV Yes, you have told that.
JvP Oh, I have told that. A number of years ago I wanted to see if I could find the sons, because naturally they were children during the war and I thought to tell them what actually happened to their father. How it almost succeeded, but did not succeed. And in the Amsterdam telephone book I found a series of names. Bregstein. I phoned them all until finally there was one that it was and then I met both Philo Bregstein and the other son and told them about their father.

00:59:02

[image 04:08:39.21]

IV And how did they react?

JvP And before I had already via...Who was it...it was someone who did a study about the after-effects of the war. How many Jewish people had kept their papers that they had to prove that they were not Jewish and how a trauma remained there. It was very interesting. I have forgotten the name of who it was.

IV Loeke Content?

JvP Loeke, yes. Loeke Content. Yes.

IV She did research into mixed marriages, I believe, was that not so?

JvP Yes. Yes, yes. And with mixed marriages it was also variable. Then at the beginning there was that arrangement with Wimmer that they would not be followed, but later the SS said one time that if they had no children then they came into difficulties. And it was she I believe or someone else whom she knew who then had a child with much difficulty.

01:00:04

[image 04:09:39.15]

JvP But first there was a doctor's declaration that she was expecting, which she was not. But then luckily she did have a child. And then for a long time it was that men must be sterilised and then you got a doctor's declaration that it had already happened, or some such. But in any case, Calmeyer was angry about that sort of thing and he did indeed try to help.

IV Hmm.

JvP But with an appeal to German laws.

IV Yes.

JvP Interesting. And he also stuck to the German law that...you see you were Jewish if your four grandparents were Jewish, then you were fully Jewish, but those 4 grandparents had also to be Jewish, so if you had a great grandparent who was not Jewish, then that applied also to the one grandparent.

01:01:04

[image 04:10:37.02]

JvP So you needed just 4 great grandparents for each one and then you were completely non-Jewish, which was ridiculous of course...But that was a German arrangement and Calmeyer said, "Look, I stick to the German law and it is applicable".

IV Oh.

JvP And as a result you could also do crazy things. And it was nice; when you discovered someone in the population register with a Jewish name, who was not Jewish. It could happen because there were once some. Levi and Cohen not so easy. But there was once someone with such a name and who was not Jewish. What you then did, you collected someone, you had 4 Jewish grandparents but one of them was called Levi and was not Jewish. But it was not one of yours, it was one of someone else, but then we changed somewhere between your real Jewish grandparents and we changed you yourself so that that Levi was your Jewish grandparent.

01:02:12

[image 04:11:41.21]

JvP And then you introduced and then of course you knew for sure that Calmeyer would say, "Miessen, that is senseless, of course this Levi is a Jew". Then he investigated it

and it was not genuine, but then they did not investigate the connection, because you had set them on the false track. That is an example of how we did it. And sometimes we did it with a letter from abroad and he came with an envelope with a stamp in the dossier that we had made ourselves. Such crazy things came in for it.

IV Yes.

JvP And splendid love letters.

IV (laughs) from unfaithful...?

JvP Yes., yes, yes.

IV ...unfaithful wives?

JvP Yes. And I know for example Else Perreira too, when she saw it she was shocked by it...

01:03:06

[image 04:12:33.15]

IV Elsa Perreira was...She was in...I think she was still in Westerbork. Then at the very last moment...

JvP Yes, she was fetched out at the very last moment.

IV Yes, you had mentioned her. But did she read the letter?

JvP Yes, if you find that dossier then you'll see it.

IV Yes.

JvP And the director of the Archive, Bert Lever, of the Nationaal Archief or whatever it is. He discussed that with me because people were coming to him and then they saw that dossier and then I gave him a letter saying that I. None of the cases was known. And there were a lot of them. Never a genuine unfaithful case was found.

IV (laughs)

JvP Which indeed is also true.

IV So you had actually updated whole population registers in this way.

JvP After the war people from the population register were angry that we had introduced forgeries into it. It should not have been done.

01:04:08

[image 04:13:33.14]

JvP I said, "Well, the people are still alive, I am sorry." (laughs)

IV Oh. I, I believe you had told me that. I say Nijg's archive, another lawyer.

JvP Yes, yes.

IV And, er.

JvP Now I remember. You saw a letter from me that I signed which I remember absolutely nothing about.

IV Yes.

JvP But I do remember that the Dutch investigation into Calmeyer was originally done very badly. The first time you provided a declaration to a policeman and he writes it up, but he does not ask you to sign it or read it, that is his statement.

IV That is after the war, do you mean?

JvP After the war. And that. And someone came after that, and then there is another person who did it again and then we could correct it and make it quite different.

IV Yes.

JvP And I was...I thought it a very bad procedure.

01:05:13

[image 04:14:35.19]

- IV That was the police investigation into Calmeyer after the war?
JvP Yes. Yes.
IV Then you were, you were?
JvP But that means that there in the dossier is a statement that the policeman wrongly wrote up and you don't get to see that.
IV Yes.
JvP They should at least let you see it and you must sign it. I would never have signed it. Ach.
IV Yes, that happened rather often after the war, I believe.
JvP Yes, it could still well happen now, because they always do it so crazily.
IV Yes.
JvP That is one of the few things that they do better in South Africa, then you have to sign if you state something.
IV Officially that is the case in the Netherlands too.
JvP Oh yes?
IV Yes.
JvP Oh, I did not know that.
IV But I want to also say about Nijg. In that archive I found so much that he made comments about. And that he had made whole genealogies. So from the family trees.
JvP Yes.
IV Genealogies, family trees, and then with blank white spaces.
JvP Yes.

01:06:13

[image 04:15:33.24]

- IV And he said, "You can fill them in beautifully."
JvP Yes.
IV Did you also do that, that sort?
JvP Yes, yes, yes, that is very good, Teutscher did that sort of thing, he liked it, he was then a gynaecologist, as they said then. (laughs)
IV (laughs)
JvP Is also a difficult word.
IV Good, I think I am finished. We should just ask if there is anything else?
JvP You must go over that tape otherwise you won't be on top of it. Shall we replay it?
IV I am doing my best not to laugh the whole time, it is difficult.
JvP Beware, I have been careful.
IV Because I had one more question. We have already talked a lot obliquely. About danger and fear and...
JvP Yes.
IV It was really dangerous work that you did and you said earlier that one of the most dangerous situations which you were involved in concerned Mrs van Thalingen-Dols.
JvP Yes, yes.

01:07:14

[image 04:16:31.16]

IV Um.
JvP Not me specially, but the man who...
IV In general.
JvP ...the man who (...?) was declared, he was in danger.
IV Yes.
JvP Because, the perhaps the lawyer can easily cope in that case, I don't know, but the man can never cope.
IV Ah. Did you yourself personally...did you think, "Oh, now I can almost get there", the scariest moment was perhaps that telephone conversation?
JvP Yes but not while it was going on, yes there were a couple of times it was; what you say about it...
IV Yes.
JvP You knew that it was dangerous, but you cannot do differently.
IV Oh.
JvP It is partly, if you now ask me, "Would you do it again?", then I would say, "I don't know." If you ask, "What would you do if someone points a revolver at you, would I jump in between it or not?" That I don't know.

01:08:14
[image 04:17:30.02]

JvP It is something that you decide at that moment, but you can't decide in advance if you will be brave or not. You do what you have to do. And if you do it then you do it not in order that you are brave at that moment, that does not come into it.
IV And do you, ah; did you go home afterwards and talk about it with your parents? Because you were all in the resistance, or not at all?
JvP We never chatted about the cases.
IV No?
JvP Or practically not, no.
IV With Kotting?
JvP Yes with Kotting.
IV Oh.
JvP But you keep it separate.
IV Yes. Your move to South Africa. I dare not really ask you, but...
JvP Yes.
IV ...did it also have to do with that you had so much freedom here then. You were a young youth, you could do everything, and it was also a completely new...?
JvP But that freedom ceased when the war ceased, after that I falsified no sentences.
IV No.
JvP (laughs)

01:09:12
[image 04:18:25.10]

IV But was it too difficult also for you to adapt to a different sort of life that was less..?
JvP In South Africa, yes, yes, it was.
IV No I mean here, that it was also...
JvP Well it was comparable.

01:09:25

[image 04:18:37.22]

END