

SLA, Casper
Netherlands Documentation Project
Dutch
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Casper Sla was born on August 28, 1926 and grew up in Schiedam. There he saw how his Jewish neighbors across the road were deported. He talks mostly about the period in Germany from December 1944 onward when he worked at forced labor, "Arbeitseinsatz." During his work there in the Munich area he met Jewish forced laborers from Dachau concentration camp. He saw what a bad state these people were in and talks about the work they were forced to do. He also describes the moment when Jewish prisoners were forced to kick a fellow prisoner to death. He also talks about the liberation and talks about his friendship with a Jewish man names **Max Weiner** who turned out to have survived the war.

Box 1, Tape 1

[01:] 00:39:17 – [01:] 09:22:08
00:00 – 10:00

Casper Sla talks about his youth in Schiedam where he grew up in a large family; indicates that the family was not religious; talks about his father's work in the shipbuilding and in the clothing industry; talks about the social relations in the city of Schiedam; indicates that he found it a wonderful place to grow up; says he doesn't remember any Jewish children at his primary school; says his best friend at secondary school on Frans Halsplein was Jewish; says that until 1995 he thought that this friend **Max Weiner** had been gassed; talks about an article in the newspaper; explains the role that **Max Weiner's** family's Russian background played in their survival; talks about how they got back into contact; describes the bombing of Rotterdam.

[01:] 09:22:09 – [01:] 18:58:20
10:01 – 20:01

Casper Sla describes the city of Rotterdam a day after the bombardment; describes how he had to change from one school building to another several times because the Germans took them over; indicates that he was quite carefree; says at the same time that it was a fearful time; indicates that at first it was quiet and he didn't notice much about the war; describes how the atmosphere grew more foreboding; talks about how at first his brother got on with the Germans; says he was arrested in a round-up in Rotterdam; describes how Dutch National Socialists behaved towards others; describes how a man was mistreated by a Dutch SS man; recalls witnessing his Jewish friend being shouted at; indicates that there were jokes about Jews before the war, but that they weren't discriminatory; describes the reaction to people who shouted abuse at **Weiner**.

[01:] 18:58:21 – [01:] 28:33:21
20:02 – 30:00

Casper Sla talks about his friendship with **Weiner**; describes how they communicated between the Marinestraat and the Leidenstraat; tells us how **Weiner** and his family were suddenly arrested by Dutch policemen; says he lost his friend all of a sudden; talks about round-ups in Schiedam, Gouda and Aken; explains that **Weiner** and his family were arrested early in the war because they were of Russian descent; describes how other Jews were deported later; tells how their Jewish neighbors opposite were taken away by Dutch policemen; mentions the emptying of their house; remembers the passive attitude of the opposite neighbors; explains what information was known about the fate of the Jews; indicates that there was some knowledge of their fate because of the German Jewish refugees; says most bystanders were sympathetic towards the Jews; indicates that having a Jewish background did not play a role for many people; indicates that they didn't talk about this at home; claims not to have known about the gas chambers; says he only found out about this when he was in Germany; talks about his arrest in Rotterdam on 10 November, 1944; describes how he was transported within the Netherlands to Wezep; describes the guards at Camp Wezep; saw how someone who tried to flee was shot dead.

[01:] 28:33:22 – [01:] 39:08:15
30:01 – 41:01

Casper Sla describes how the train on the way to Germany was shot at; says that the men were locked up inside the train; talks about a train crash near the border at Leer; describes the consequences of this crash; talks about the rest of the trip; talks about the guards in Germany near Bremen and Osnabrück; mentions the work on the railways near Lemförde; talks about a boy who fled and was temporarily put in a concentration camp; describes the work he had to do; explains why the guards were older men; indicates that there were seven boys from his school in the group; talks about the reconstruction work they had to do after a bombing; says he thinks they were there with approximately 300 men; indicates that the security guards there weren't that bad; describes the atmosphere among the men.

[01:] 39:08:16 – [01:] 48:45:02
41:02 – 51:01

Casper Sla confirms that in Germany they were kind of isolated; describes the contact he had with a German woman; describes the hardship they experienced on a transport to Munich in 1944; describes how the German landscape looked a sorry sight; describes how they had to sleep in Feldkirchen in cattle trucks that were not moving; describes the cold there; mentions the liberation by the Americans on 1 May, 1945; talks about the work on the new railway line between Feldkirchen and Sörending; mentions the lack of food; talks about the arrival of Polish forced labourers; talks about physical complaints like sores and lice.

[01:] 48:45:03 – [01:] 54:29:01
51:02 – 57:00

Casper Sla describes his contact with the Poles; talks about stealing potatoes and making their own gin; talks about the guards; describes how he tried to skip work; indicates that he did business with French people who were in the same area; indicates that the guards never beat or shot anyone there; indicates that as young boys they would sometimes tease the older guards; explains why groups of Jewish forced workers from Dachau concentration camp were then brought to Feldkirchen; talks about the work done by these groups of Jewish forced labourers; stresses that the Jews were beaten.

**[01:] 54:29:02 – [02:] 01:12:02
57:01 – 01:04**

Casper Sla says he thinks that the group of Jews arrived with them in March 1945; indicates that many of them had already been in camp Dachau for a long time; describes the bad physical shape these people were in; indicates that there were men as well as women of different ages among them; describes the clothes and shoes of the Dachau prisoners; talks about how Kapos guarded this group; says he believes these Kapos were not Jewish; confirms that the Jews had to do heavy work because they had to dig through frozen earth; talks about Kapos who were homosexual; mentions having had short conversations with the Dutch Jews; remembers a conversation with a Jewish pianist; describes a fight among Jews about food.

Box 1, Tape 2

**[00:] 29:03:14 – [03:] 10:39:21
00:00 – 11:01**

Casper Sla talks about the prison clothes the Jews wore; explains how the Jews were brought daily by train from Dachau to their work; mentions the Kapos and armed German guards who guarded the Jewish prisoners; describes how the Jewish forced laborers were kicked and slapped by the Kapos; describes how the work was divided around the train line; describes how desperate the Jews were for food; indicates that contact was hardly possible; describes the Jews as very scared; remembers the only contact as that with the Jewish pianist; describes how Jews received the order from a Kapo to kick another Jewish prisoner to death
[interviewee becomes emotional].

**[03:] 10:39:22 – [03:] 19:18:10
11:02 – 20:01**

Casper Sla talks in detail about the incident in which Jews were made to kick another Jewish prisoner to death; describes the group of Dutch bystanders who were standing a few metres away; indicates that they stopped a longshoreman who wanted to intervene; says the group of bystanders felt powerless; remembers the sound of shoes against the head of the Jewish man on the ground; recalls that they shouted but stresses that it was too dangerous to intervene; mentions having seen someone being kicked to death on another occasion as well, from further away; says that the Kapos were sadists; talks about how the liberation was approaching; states that the guards fled a day before the liberation.

**[03:] 19:18:11 – [03:] 28:56:06
20:02 – 30:03**

Casper Sla says that on the last night both groups slept together in the shunting-yard; talks about a conversation with a Jewish man from Amsterdam who said he drove his own wife and children from a gas chamber to a furnace; talks about contact he had earlier during the war with an SS man who spoke to them in a threatening way about a chimney; states that he heard during the war about people being burned; declares he heard the word “gas chamber” only after the liberation; says he saw the Jewish man once more; indicates that this man’s

family was gassed in Dachau; mentions a conversation he had when he was back in the Netherlands with a Jewish boxer called **Sanders**; talks about his time working for the United Nations Refugee Relief Association (UNRRA); mentions conversations with Jewish girls who had worked in ammunitions factories; recalls how they made sure people did not kill themselves by overeating; talks about the Nazi clothing that was distributed; indicates that the Kapos had also fled.

[03:] 28:56:07 – [03:] 38:29:25
30:04 – 40:00

Casper Sla talks about the departure of the guards and the Germans; says the Jews never received anything; describes how he earned money or coupons in Munich by carrying packages or suitcases; says how the word Dachau was displayed at the train station in Munich; talks about a sympathetic and helpful German nurse; talks about the conversation he had with this nurse about caring for people; says he thinks that people in Dachau knew what was happening in the camp; tells how all the Dutch men in his group survived; tells about the arrest of his neighbours over the road in Schiedam; describes how the neighbors' house was emptied and new inhabitants arrived; describes in detail how he saw the arrest of the neighbors opposite.

[03:] 38:30:00 – [03:] 49:06:17
40:01 – 51:01

Casper Sla says more Jewish families disappeared; remarks that people didn't talk about this among each other and that it was suppressed; says you have to move on in life [*shows a picture of the boys from the "Arbeitseinsatz"*]; talks about friendships after the war; talks about the search for his friend **Max** after the war; says **Max's** father was shot dead because of fear of espionage in the Soviet Union; shows a newspaper article about the train disaster and the call up for "Arbeitseinsatz" [*reads this call up out loud*].

[03:] 49:06:18 – [03:] 53:50:24
51:02 – 56:01

Casper Sla says a person received 25 guilders for informing on Jews; indicates that he heard and read this in a book about the history of Schiedam; shows a picture of him and **Max** on a school trip together; indicates that he is still in contact with **Max** and speaks Dutch with him and his family.