

Netherlands Documentation Project

Interview Summary

RG-50.570*0018

Interviewee **Mr. Jan de Jong**
Date **26 January 2005**
Location **Amsterdam**

Short Summary

Mr. de Jong worked at a housing cooperative. Many tenants were Jews. He saw several arrests in the Diamant neighborhood in Amsterdam. He saw what happened to the houses.

Long Summary

- 00 Born 9 September 1921 in Amsterdam. His father was with the police, his mother cleaned houses, one brother. His mother was reformed (gereformeerd). His father came from a family of circuspeople (kermisklanten). Mother went to the church on Sunday, father and the sons did not.
- 03 He grew up in De Pijp, a working class neighborhood. He went to a public school, children from all kinds of religions, also Jewish children.
- 09 The crisis years. At home, there was talk about Germany. He wanted to be a veterinarian, but because of the crisis he had to go to work straight away.
- 13 At 14 in 1935 he began work at the housing cooperative. It was a cooperative of Social Democrats. The head of the cooperation was the front man in politics. He became more in touch with the problems in the world.
- 15 About the function of a housing cooperative, to build housing for the working class. The AWV (General Housing Cooperation, Algemene Woningbouwvereniging) had 3315 houses in 1935 and 7000 members.
- 18 Kristallnacht
- 19 May 10, 1940. It was so sudden, he raced on his bike to the office. The names of the heads of the AWV are: Evert Kupers, Cees Woudenberg, Jan Bommer and Lolke van de Wal. Well known social democrats.
- 23 There was talk about razzia's and pogroms in Germany, but just at the beginning of the occupation nothing happened, really.
- 24 About 45 % of the AWV tenants were Jewish. de Jong remembered the milkstore of Godfried de Jong (not related to interviewee). He was the father of Lou de Jong (later a well known Dutch historian). Godfried de Jong was very very worried. Others were making fun of him, why worry, nothing was happening.
- 27 About the attack at ice cream shop Koco
- 28 The razzia's in 1941. Mr De Jong did not witness these razzia's, but he did see the consequences. Next to the office lived a Jewish family, their son, Max Leao de Leguna was arrested during this razzia
- 31 About the Dutch police, they took part in it. (Doen net zo dapper mee). He lived at Rivierenlaan (now Kennedylaan) when he walked to the office, he saw an arrest at Victoriaplein. People were being put into a tram. Life just went

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on while these people were put on the tram. People with bags, about 30, all ages. He saw a bakery boy biking by. It was all done by Dutch Schalkhaar police, dressed in black and Dutch detectives (rechercheurs). How was it possible that life goes on, when these things happen.

35 De Jong knew that they would be taken to the Dutch Theater or Westerbork to work in Germany and Poland. But at his office, these stories were not believed. Already in 1938-9, there was talk of concentration camps. No talk of gassing.

37 Young children and elders were taken.

39 People were afraid, but they had their bags ready in the hall way. One time he was driving his bike. At the Ceintuurbaan he saw a truck of the Grune Polizei with men and women in it. A man inside the truck saw an acquaintance on the street, he shouted at him: "Please tell them that we have been taken away." The truck drove off.

An other day there was a truck near his office, during the day, taking away people. The Grune Polizei helped the elderly to clime inside the truck. Grune Polizei and Dutch police in civilian clothing.

When people started to be taken away in the night, the AWV decided to hide its administration.

44 It only took ten to fifteen minutes, this taking away. Tenants would lock the door and give the key to the Germans. Keys were taken to "Gemeentelijk Bureay van Inkwartiering".

On the 3rd floor above the office lived the family Swart.

47 The furniture was taken away carelessly. On the street you would see broken stuff. People from the neighborhood would look if there was anything left that they would like to have.

The houses went to people who had lived at the coast and were evacuated.

One day a woman came with a letter from the NSDAP, she wanted a certain house in the Saffierstraat. The letter was signed by Mr. Pott. De Jong and his boss did not want to give her the key.

50 They had to come to the Euterpestraat to Aus der Funten. They had to give the key. There were dozens of cases like that. Women who had relationships with Germans.

52 They would also ask for houses that were not emptied yet.

The heads of the AWV all had gone into hiding.

After the war the law protected the new tenants, so these people stayed in the houses. But not many Jewish tenants returned.

One man came back, Mr. Meijer Sluysen, he had lived at the Israelkade and had fled to England. He wanted his house back, but he couldn't get it.

57 Only eight people came back and visited the office of the AWV for a new house.

58 His father was with the police, but he was with motor-police, he was never involved in razzia's or arrests.

break

De Jong knew the name Westerbork, he thought the Jews were being held as prisoners in concentration camps.

After the war, nobody was helping the returning Jews to give them houses. The AWV did, although by law they could not give them back their own houses. It

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was forbidden to give priority to Jews, but they did.

Some Jews came to the office because they had hidden belongings in their old houses. In those cases the police became involved in entering the house and collecting the belongings.

Mr. de Jong ended with the question: Why were the rail tracks never bombed?