

KARS, Herman
Netherlands Documentation Project
Dutch
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Herman Kars was married to a Jewish woman and describes the arrest of his family-in-law who were in hiding. He explains that the family had the opportunity to escape from the Dutch Theater, "Hollandse Schouwburg" [*which served as the collection point for deportees in Amsterdam*], but they were afraid to do this. After their deportation to the Westerbork and Vught concentration camps, respectively, there was some more correspondence, which Herman Kars reads aloud. He tells us about other arrests he saw and about the people for whom he and his wife provided a hiding place.

File 1

[01:] 00:00:03 – [01:] 09:39:18
00:00 – 09:59

Herman Kars says he was born on October 31, 1915 in Kerkrade and lived in Amsterdam; says his family was Roman Catholic but not actively practicing; states that he was the oldest of four sons and went to a public state school and then to high school which he did not finish; describes how he began to work for the railroad company; says he lost his job in the economic crisis; describes the unemployment in the Netherlands.

[01:] 09:39:19 – [01:] 19:17:17
10:00 – 20:01

Herman Kars indicates that his parents voted "red" [*socialist*] but were not further politically involved; talks about his membership in the AJC youth movement [*interviewee may be referencing the HJC*]; describes the reactions to German attacks on various European countries; says he had to go into the army in May 1940 and describes how he ended up in a neighborhood first aid post; talks about the time when a bomb fell on Amsterdam; says that he quickly decided to marry his Jewish girlfriend; describes the beginning of the anti-Jewish measures in 1941; explains why his wife did not wear the yellow star; states that they were married in June 1940 and lived in Amsterdam West; says that he has lived on Bos en Lommerweg since 1943 [*where he still lives today*].

[01:] 19:17:18 – [01:] 28:52:15
20:02 – 30:00

Herman Kars says they had one of his wife's friends living with them in hiding beginning in 1942; explains that later there were four people in hiding with them; says that he witnessed an arrest in the Rivierenbuurt area of Amsterdam Zuid; describes how an old man was arrested by a Dutch man in 1943; recounts how in 1943 his wife's family was called up for deportation; describes how his parents-in-law were hiding; recalls that the police found an empty house; describes the arrest of his mother-in-law who was visiting Kars' wife; says he went to tell his father-in-law this news; describes how he then brought his father-in-law to the

Dutch Theater, “Hollandse Schouwburg”, he did not want to leave his wife alone *[it is unclear if he is referring to his own wife or his mother in law here]*.

[01:] 28:52:16 – [01:] 38:28:07
30:01 – 39:59

Herman Kars describes the feeling he had when he took his father-in-law to the “Hollandse Schouwburg”; mentions the rumors about what would happen to the Jews; says that he had a bad feeling about this; describes what it looked like at the “Hollandse Schouwburg” when he said goodbye to his father-in-law; describes how he returned to the Hollandse Schouwburg’s garden in the evening in order to free his parents-in-law; says they did not dare climb over a fence into the garden to escape; explains how two Jewish men did escape in this way; tells us how disappointed he was in his wife at that moment *[again, unclear if this means that the father-in-law was disappointed in his wife or if it was the interviewee who was disappointed in his own wife. Also unclear whether his wife was held at the “Hollandse Schouwburg”]*.

[01:] 38:28:08 – [01:] 48:07:08
40:00 – 50:03

Herman Kars describes the contact he had with his family-in-law once they were in camp Westerbork; tells us that he sent them packages with food and other goods; says his sister-in-law in camp Vught was outraged that she never received any of the things they sent her; describes how it happened that his sister-in-law was arrested by two Amsterdam policemen; tells us about the continued arrests to which he was witness; tells us that his sister-in-law worked for Philips *[picks up a postcard and explains that this was the last message his sister-in-law wrote when she was being deported to Poland]*; shares that the card was found by a German woman and ended up with him; describes how he sent packages to the Jewish Council to be posted *[shows his wife’s identification card with the letter ‘J’ on it]*.

[01:] 48:07:09 – [01:] 57:43:04
50:04 – 01:00:02

Herman Kars reads out several letters that his sister-in-law sent to her fiancée **Eddy** *[the sister’s letters, written in a bitter tone, make it clear that most packages never arrived]*; says they never heard anything from her again; reports that she was gassed in Auschwitz *[becomes emotional when he shows the memorial book of the dead]*; reads out her name as **De Leeuw, Reintje de Leeuw**, born June 19, 1917 and died January 31, 1944; quietly explains again how the arrests by Dutch policemen took place; describes the reactions he got when he married a Jewish woman at the beginning of the war.

[01:] 57:43:05 – [02:] 05:24:18
01:00:03 – 01:08:04

Herman Kars describes the difference between rich and poor German Jews who had arrived in the Netherlands from the 1930s onwards; describes the last contact he had with his father-in-law; indicates that they were deported to Westerbork on July 20; explains that his parents-in-law were killed shortly after arriving in Sobibor on July 2, 1943; explains what happened at the Jewish Council office when he went there to bring a package; describes the sarcastic letter he received from his sister-in-law; says that unlike his marriage, not all mixed marriages *[between a Jew and a non-Jew]* were spared during this time; shares that none of

his family-in-law returned but that they were all killed; describes what it was like to live with Jews in hiding in his house; says he got divorced after the war.

File 2

[03:] 00:43:06 – [03:] 09:18:17
00:43 – 09:51

Herman Kars reads out a letter written by his Jewish parents-in-law from the Westerbork concentration camp asking him to send them clothing and other items; explains the stamp on the letter and how the Jewish Council organized the mail; explains that all his parents-in-laws' possessions were taken away by the Puls removal company; explains that the letters were typed at the Westerbork camp; reads out the sarcastic letter he received from his sister-in-law; finally *[with emotion]* reads out the farewell text on the postcard that his sister-in-law **Reintje** wrote on the train to Poland.