

EBBE-PRONT, Mary
Netherlands Documentation Project
Dutch
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In this interview, Mary Ebbe-Pront talks mainly about the Jews in the vicinity of Transvaalplein in Amsterdam Oost (East). She describes several roundups and the ransacking of households [*so-called "Puls-ing" because of the Puls company that emptied out the apartments of deported Jews*]. She also talks in detail about her role in accompanying Jews on their way to the Polderweg [*railway station from where Jews were deported*], and about the use of her parents' house as a temporary refuge for people in hiding. In the last part of the interview, Mary Ebbe-Pront discusses what she calls her "helpless role" and talks about what she did and did not know about what happened to the Jews.

Box 1, Tape 1

**[01:] 00:00:00 – [01:] 08:34:07
00:00 – 09:01**

Mary says she was born in Antwerp, Belgium; says her father was Jewish, that is, a "full" Jew according to the Nazis but her grandmother and mother were not Jewish; says she moved to the Netherlands in 1939 and the family had financial difficulties; says they lived in a lively neighborhood near Transvaal square in Amsterdam; recalls that many Jewish people who worked in the diamond business lived there; talks about her school years; reports that she was a member of the Dutch Social Democratic Youth organization, "Arbeiders Jeugd Centrale," (AJC); says she was not aware of the changes taking place before the war; recalls that her family was surprised by the outbreak of war but that everyone expected it would soon be over; describes the months after the war's beginning as calm.

**[01:] 08:34:08 – [01:] 19:12:02
09:02 – 20:06**

She says the bad times started later; recalls seeing, for example, her friends leave to go and "work"; says she thinks that people thought they really were being sent away to work; says people left optimistically because nobody believed it would be as bad as it turned out to be; talks about a friend whose parents had been arrested and who spent a night with the Pront family; discusses another family who hid in their house for 14 days but says that it became too dangerous after that; states that she went with her father to pick up the backpacks of these family members and ran into members of the Black Police, "Zwarte Politie" [*Dutch police that collaborated with the Germans*], who even helped them carry the backpacks; recalls the long line of Jewish people on their way to the Polderweg, and says she helped carry their belongings; remembers clearly that she was caught by the Nazis because of this but with the help of her father was quickly released; remembers the atmosphere was very sad; knows the names of people who left; says her family had was given a large suitcase by some Jewish acquaintances to keep safe.

[01:] 19:12:03 – [01:] 29:48:03

20:07 – 29:03

She says the Black Police ransacked houses and also found the big suitcase in their house; remembers her mother giving a big basket to a police officer and telling him she had seen him stealing a motorbike, which was not allowed by the Germans; talks more about the ransacking of homes [*Puls-ing*] and the collaboration of Dutch people; says the Black Police were the most notorious because they were so fanatical; says her father was not arrested because of the head bandage he was wearing as a result of cysts; remembers a lot from what she heard from others such as the number of people in hiding in their house; stresses how dangerous and risky this was; saw her friends being taken away across the street; remembers that everyone took a lot of luggage with them; says she helped carry the luggage to a big truck that was waiting; says she was warned again not to help Jews and was even kicked by a Dutch man; says by then the Jews had started to become worried.

[01:] 29:48:04 – [01:] 37:27:02
29:04 – 39:07

She tells us she did not talk much to the people she helped; says to her it was obvious what was going on, but she did not really let it get to her because life would have been unbearable; describes the departure of many people in her neighborhood; talks about the time someone threw their baby on her grandfather's bed in order to have it rescued, but says the baby was found and the grandfather arrested; adds that he was soon released; describes the moment in 1944 when her future husband and two others were hiding in their attic, and police came in for a house search; talks about witnessing the infamous fight at the Coco ice cream parlour.

[01:] 37:27:03 – [01:] 48:52:05
39:08 – 51:00

She talks about her parents' house, which was a transfer house for people in hiding during the occupation; describes a moral dilemma her parents faced with a couple in hiding because the man had cheated with another person in hiding and had asked if that person could stay with them; reports that her father refused but after a couple of months the couple came to their house anyway; talks about the stress this caused; admits the heart of the Transvaal area was a dangerous place to go into hiding; describes the period of the German occupation as a very unpleasant one; says that she could not find a job because she had a Jewish grandparent; talks about a boy who was severely beaten up in the Euterpestraat [*location of SS headquarters in Amsterdam*]; talks again about her friends who were taken away; says other people came to live in the abandoned houses; wonders in retrospect why the Jewish people did not resist more; says she blocked her experiences out a lot because she could not cope with them.

[01:] 48:52:06 – [01:] 56:31:19
51:01 – 58:59

Mary says she struggled with these thoughts; says that she suffers from her memories; says she already knew during the war that Jews were being deported in cattle wagons; says she could not understand how people could act in such a cruel way; states that she hopes people would resist if it ever happened again and gives an example of Muslims; describes the Polderweg as a desolate area; recalls plans to build a fancy fairground there after the war; says people felt displaced there; describes her own feelings of helplessness.

[01:] 56:31:20 – [02:] 02:13:10
59:00 – 01:05:58

Mary talks about the Dutch Theatre, “Hollandsche Schouwburg” [*in Amsterdam, used as a collection point for Dutch Jews that were to be deported*] where friends of hers were kept; describes the cruelty during the roundups; talks about the collaboration of the Black Police; says the Polderweg was guarded by Germans; says she yelled at two boys from the Black Police; describes her father’s reaction; talks about several people she escorted to the Polderweg; experiences these memories as both visual and as written text; describes her mental pictures as silent and colorless.