

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

MIRJAM PINKHOF

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Sylvia Brockmon

Date: July 8, 1989

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Gratz College

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MP - Mirjam Pinkhof¹ [interviewee]

SB - Sylvia Brockmon [interviewer]

Date: July 8, 1989

Tape one, side one:

SB: Please, Mirjam, tell me where you were born, and when, and a little bit about your family.

MP: A little bit about my family. As you have been writing down already, my family lived in Holland for a few hundred years already, so we had a real Dutch family. The family of my mother, Lopez Cardozo, they came from Portugal. My father, he, they came from Ashkenaz, maybe Poland, maybe Russia, maybe Germany. I don't know. But they came already in sixteen hundred and twenty something. So they were real Jews, Dutch Jews, living in Amsterdam, in the Jewish quarter. This Jewish quarter, there were very poor people living there under unbelievable circumstances. And the Waterman family, they belonged to this very poor, population that lived in dark dwellings, with sanitary conditions that we can't imagine today. And in the years 1920's, somewhere between '20 and '25, well, still earlier, there was a movement to demolish this ghetto, which was a real Jewish ghetto in Amsterdam, because of the diseases and unbearable circumstances. And they started building *shikunim*, [Hebrew] building projects--simple houses in big blocks--for these people in other parts on the outskirts of Amsterdam and at this point, my father who was then a young boy, he did something remarkable. He stepped out of Amsterdam entirely. He was an idealist. He wanted to grow roses and started a course for agriculture in Holland in a special place, and bought *adamot*...

SB: Some land.

MP: Land in Loosdrecht. He earned money as a diamond worker in the diamond...

SB: Industry.

MP: [unclear] in Amsterdam, and with the money he earned two days a week, he stepped out and went to his agricultural education and bought land in Loosdrecht. He bought the pits of apples and pears and plants, and planted them in this newly-bought land, and afterwards he treated them to become--grafted them, is that the right word?

SB: He grafted them to trees.

MP: To trees bearing the fruit. Many of these trees still consist, exist today. But these plants were very good. And then he married my mother. He took her out to this desolated piece of land. And she was very afraid in the beginning, but they were, both of them were idealists. My father was socialist, he didn't drink alcohol, and all these things that were for idealistic people in that time. And my mother was even a member of a kind of a kibbutz in Holland--people who wanted to live in community and wanted to raise their

¹nee Waterman.

own fruit and vegetables. It was called Walden after the example in America. I think it was Thoreau who...

SB: Projected the idea.

MP: Yeah, so, here the two [unclear], they stepped out of Amsterdam, and they lived in Loosdrecht, first in a very old house where I was born, in an existing building, a farm house. And afterwards my father started building a new house, where my--the three last brothers and sisters were, brothers and sisters were born. And there we lived in a kind of idealistic paradise. That's where we were brought up, in ideal conditions. Far from the dirty, ugly world around us. We knew nothing. We were absolutely brought up in a kind of *shmurat-teva* [Hebrew], what do you call it?

SB: A natural environment.

MP: Yeah. And my mother also chose special schools for us to go to to be educated, first in her vicinity special schools and afterwards in Bilthoven, and this is especially important for the rest of my story. In Bilthoven there was a school that was founded by Kees Boeke. And that was, I think, the most modern and most advanced educational experience that existed in western Europe at all. He wanted to educate his own children because he did not pay taxes, because part of the taxes went for defense and he was an absolute...

SB: Pacifist?

MP: Pacifist, and what had to do with defense, he kept far away from that. So he could not send his children to school but they fell under the law. They were supposed to go to school. And there he found a teacher who was also an idealist like the Boeke family, and this teacher was Joop Westerweel, who afterwards was so much involved in our Resistance movement. That's why I tell this a little bit more...

SB: Fully.

MP: Specific. And this Joop Westerweel, he was anti-militarist. He always opposed using *alimut* [Hebrew-violence].

SB: Violent means.

MP: Violent...

SB: Means.

MP: Means. Also in the Resistance. And I want--you want me to tell more about this Boeke school?

SB: No, that isn't necessary. Did you have much contact with other Jews?

MP: No.

SB: You had no contact with other Jews. Did you have any kind of Jewish milieu, any kind of Jewish feeling or education during all of this period?

MP: Education, non-existent. But, in 1938 I was a teacher in this school of Kees Boeke, in Bilthoven. And there, not far from this school, was a house that belonged to the--it was a vacation house, from the Jewish *yetumim* [Hebrew-orphans]-- Do you know these houses?

SB: Orphans, an orphan home.

MP: An orphan, Jewish orphan home from the City of Utrecht. And this house was after 1938, then there was a big stream of German refugees, Jewish refugees, that came to Holland. This house was used to house a group of Jewish children [pause]-- that came, without their parents. Part of their parents were imprisoned or put in concentration camps in Germany or in Austria, and they came through all kind of philanthropic organizations, Jewish organizations, in Holland. We tried to receive them and give them education and so on and so on. This Boeke school in Bilthoven, they had a lot of specific rules. It was not only a place where you went to enrich your knowledge, but also how to live together as a community. And they always ended up the day, at the end the day, with a big sitting, all the people sitting together and the children were allowed to ask questions, to ask for change of the rules in their educational system. And on a specific day, one of the boys stood up at the end of the day and said, "This morning I had a very specific experience. I came to school on my bicycle as everyday, and I passed a house where I saw children sitting without any occupation. They climbed up the trees and didn't have anything to do. I started to talk with them and they told me that they were Jewish refugee children from Germany who all came after their Crystal Night, and they had a bed, and they had food, but they had nothing to do and they were terribly..."

SB: Upset?

MP: But they didn't have anything to do. They were--that time went by with nothing. So this boy told this. And Joop Westerweel heard this and he said, "Oh, let them come to our school." But here came the difference between Joop Westerweel and Kees Boeke, who was originally a missionary. He spent two years in the Lebanon trying to change...

SB: Convert.

MP: To convert Islamic people to Christianity. And we were such a big group of Jewish children in this school, he got a bit scared, so there came a compromise and they hired a big building near the school and all these children were housed in this specific building. I was appointed to be the teacher of this specific group and the wife of Kees Boeke, she was annoyed about this separating this Jewish group from the rest of the school, she was the teacher of English. She was English born, and she started to take the children out of this house and bring them to the school, into those regular classes, and some others followed her. So slowly they were more integrated in the school. But, at this point, this was for me the first meeting with what happened with the Jews in Germany.

SB: And what year was this?

MP: '38.

SB: 1938.

MP: I didn't know anything about it. I am ashamed to say so, but it's the truth. And with this encount...

SB: Encounter.

MP: ...awoke in me my Jewish identity which sprung up as very strongly, which annoyed very much Joop Westerweel who wanted me to stay Humanistic, without this specific identity. It made him say somewhere, a bit later, "I wish I would meet now a person who would not point me back to my *Arier* [Aryan] corner." He did not accept this *Entscheidung* between Jews and non-Jews.

SB: The separation?

MP: The separation. He didn't accept it. And he did not accept my new Jewish identity. It annoyed him. But that's what happened. And I then went to a rabbi near Loosdrecht and I asked him questions and--again I tell it because it gives a picture of how Jews that were not religious at that time lived in Holland--I asked him what is the difference between the synagogue and the *shul*? I didn't know. I asked him what is Zionism exactly? I didn't know. I was already past twenty years old. I had no idea. So my Jewish education was zero. And here, in this point, I started, like everybody who becomes newly convinced, I was very, active and...

SB: Enthusiastic?

MP: Enthusiastic. We were members of the Jewish movement--Chaya [MS sister] and I, only the two of us. The others did not.

SB: So you say you became involved in the Jewish movement?

MP: In the Jewish youth movement.

SB: How did you become involved in the Jewish youth movement? Through what sources, how were you contacted?

MP: Well we knew it existed in Hilversum, which is next to Loosdrecht.

SB: I see.

MP: And it's a big Jewish community. And then the Germans already in 1940, they prohibited the movements and it was forbidden to have this youth movement.

SB: Now how were you affected by the anti-Jewish laws of 1938 and 1939?

MP: Well, that's what I'm telling you now. So then we started immediately an illegal youth movement in our house and in our--we had an enormous farm place. And there we started an illegal Jewish youth movement. This of course is starting before people went to school, at seven in the morning and 'til eight, so that at half past eight everybody was back at school, and so on, and so on. We were over-enthusiastic.

SB: Your own personal family, were you affected by these laws?

MP: Sure.

SB: Tell me how your life changed, or your father's life changed by these laws.

MP: Well, first of all, it was impossible to travel abroad and he was in the diamond business, and he traveled to London, and he had to get this lot of raw diamonds to...

SB: Refine.

MP: ... to refine and to work on them, to sell, so this all stopped. And soon Jews were not allowed to go to school. So I was not allowed to teach in a non-Jewish school. I

left Bilthoven already with the capture of Holland by the Germans, in May 1940, and I started a private little school at home, in Loosdrecht, in my parents' home. When the Jews from Hilversum, there was a big Jewish community, were no longer allowed to go to public schools, they all came to my school in Loosdrecht. I had the school with over sixty pupils. We installed them in the place where the sheep were living and where the chickens were living and where all the apples were stored, and in all places we had little classes and we organized a very nice school where, because of the circumstances, the emphasis was not so much on learning exact things but on having a good time, with a lot of outings and a lot of drama and performances, singing, and so on and so on.

SB: And this was in what year, again?

MP: In '41.

SB: 1941.

MP: But then, until 1942, I can still add to this that my mother, who allowed all this activity, she also invited non-Jewish artists to perform for Jewish people who all came streaming to our place and they were, these people, sitting and performing, and so on.

SB: And when did you first become aware of the anti-Jewish persecution in western and central Europe?

MP: Well in '39. That's what I told you--when these refugee children came into the school in Bilthoven.

SB: Yeah, right, and after that the persecutions increased, did you...

MP: Every day there were new laws by the Germans and the officials had to leave and they had to sign an *Arier* declaration that they were--that they had no Jewish blood. Jews were separated, step by step, like it had been in Poland and in Germany and in Austria, and all that.

SB: And did you begin to hear of Jewish killings in Holland at this time or not?

MP: Well, the first real happening was the February strike. Twenty-three to twenty-sixth of February in 1941, when in Amsterdam the non-Jewish proletarian population--is this English--proletarian?

SB: Proletarian the workers, yes.

MP: The workers, they, in Amsterdam--the Dutch people that worked with the Nazis, N.S.B. [NSB-National Socialistische Beweging, a radical right wing movement] and they are, these are groups, they were members in these groups--and they were told to irritate the Jews that lived in the Jewish Quarter. It was not a real ghetto like in Poland, with their own post and police but they were absolutely separated. They were--also there was barbed wire around the Jewish Quarter. Non-Jews were not allowed to go in and Jews were only permitted by permission to get out of the Quarter. And these people that worked with the Germans together, they were sent inside to irritate the Jewish population, to crash their windows from the shops and to plunder their shops...

SB: Merchandise.

MP: And then German Jews in this Jewish Quarter organized and they decided to fight back. And these were very brave young people. They were all members of the wrestling clubs and sports clubs. And, well, I won't elaborate too much. I don't know how much you want it in details, but here, the Jews, the proletarian Jews from Amsterdam, non-Jewish, they didn't take that. They said, "These Germans, they keep their claws off our Jews." Which is very unique in all of Europe's history.

SB: True.

MP: And about this February strike in 1941...

SB: Yes.

MP: A lot is written. There exists a lot of...

SB: Material.

MP: Material about it. But then the Germans saw that they had to eliminate this strike. They arrested 425, or something like that, Jews. They just picked them from the streets. This was the first real, what do you call it, *Razzia*.

SB: Round up.

MP: Round up in Holland from Jews. 1941. And they were sent, all of them, to Mauthausen. Among them were a lot of young Zionists from a *Hachsharah* farm Wieringen. And none of them came back. They were all murdered very soon after they were taken to Mauthausen. There came a stream of post cards telling that and this died from pneumonia, and this died from all, bla, bla. They were all killed in the most terrible way. They were, for instance, they were tied one with the back to the other, with ropes, and thrown into a...

SB: Pit.

MP: Into a pit, and things like this. It was terrible what happened to these people. So Mauthausen became a word of horror and if something happened the German said, "Be careful--Mauthausen." That was the threat of the Germans towards the Jews who did not behave as they wanted them to behave. Also, in 1941, there came a man from Prague, sent--a Jew sent by the Germans, by the Gestapo--to help organize the Jewish Council, Joodse Raad in Amsterdam. This man, his name was Yaacov Edelstein, he knew much more than people in Holland knew because he was also in the Jewish Council in Prague and he had contacts with the Germans. He knew already that thousands and thousands were murdered in Poland, which in Holland nobody knew. The Germans were very clever at keeping things secret. And this Yaacov Edelstein, who spoke Hebrew, *Ivrit*, already then, he also came to Loosdrecht where but--I didn't--I jump a little now. Next to four houses further from our, my parents' house in Loosdrecht, there was a house which was also filled by German refugees, and was altered into *Hachsharah*, a training center for Palestine. And in this house I met again many of the children that became my pupils in Bilthoven. So here I had a continued contact with some of these pupils. In this *Hachsharah* house, is *Hachsharah*, enough...

SB: It was a training house for Palestine, yes, this is understood.

MP: A training house for youth...

SB: Who wanted to go to Palestine.

MP: Yah. My husband, who became afterwards my husband, he was one of the leaders of this group in Loosdrecht and, as I told you, I was starting to--I think I lost track of what I was saying--but he was the contact between, as I told you we started an illegal youth movement...

SB: Yes.

MP: ...for Jews from Hilversum, and I knew nothing about Jewish subjects, so I needed people to come to tell us, to keep references, talks, lectures, and to teach Hebrew, and so on, and here Menachem Pinkhof, who was a leader in this training center in Loosdrecht which was a few houses from my house, he became very active in helping us educating the Jews where we lived. So that there was a lot of contact. Then--we talked about Mauthausen, about the strike, about the training center in Loosdrecht, about my private school in Loosdrecht, which ended up in 1942. Then the Germans opened a public, not public, a Jewish school, which existed very short only but there I became a teacher in that school and every day pupils were missing. They went in hiding or they fled out of the country illegally. Every morning it was a surprise to see how many pupils were left in my class.

SB: Now, they were not rounded up by the Germans; they managed to go underground or escape?

MP: At first, no. This was just before the roundups. Except for the roundup after the strike of February in 1941.

SB: Now you were talking...

MP: That starts now.

SB: I see.

MP: 1942.

SB: I see. You were talking about this man that came from Prague to organize the Jewish Councils and then what he went back to. Can we please go back to that?

MP: That's it, there I lost my track. This man told about how things were and he said, "Save whoever you can save." That was his advice. And he helped establish the Jewish Council in Amsterdam with Cohen and Asscher and they were instrumental in helping the Germans to deport the Jews and kill them in the end. But nobody knew this. These people were trying to save still whomever they could, and they thought every...

SB: Step.

MP: Every...

SB: Action.

MP: To keep it further away may save lives. But we politically, we were--O.K., not important. So, in this point, Joop Westerweel, who was a very intimate friend of mine, he said, "Whenever you get an order to go to a camp, you come to me and you stay with me." Menachem Pinkhof met in my room a man who was agriculture teacher in the same

school in Bilthoven and he said to my husband--not yet my husband--to Menachem, "Whenever you need a hiding place, you come to me and you will stay with me." So I said to Menachem, "We both have a place to hide. Let us...

SB: Go into hiding.

MP: "Go into hiding." And then Menachem says, "That's very nice, but I am responsible for these fifty trainees in Loosdrecht, in the training center in Loosdrecht and I am responsible and I can't leave them and just run away." And here was born our illegal resistance movement. Here, this made me think, "Why really only I should hide myself and Menachem? Why not all of them?" And as you understand from the first part of our tape, my friends and acquaintances were nearly all of them non-Jewish, and they were all of the groups of people that were against the German--Nazi--rules. So I had plenty of, not plenty but a lot of, addresses of people I could trust to take one of these trainees in Loosdrecht into hiding. But we soon felt that we didn't have the nerve and somehow it needed a push. And then I said, "But I only know one person who can really help us, and that is Joop Westerweel." I contacted Joop Westerweel, who by that time was the head of the Montessori school in Rotterdam, and he, when I asked him to help me with this project, to hide the whole house with some fifty and there were still some ten people round about who also belonged to this group, to hide the whole thing at once, he said, "That's what I have been waiting for."

SB: [laughs]

MP: "I need to do something. Every--what do you call it--kick the Germans give to the Jews, I feel by not doing anything, I am also guilty. I must do something. This gives me the opportunity of doing something against them." At least, from the day he started to work with us, he also had a lot of addresses, and we made a plan. We had two people who were from the beginning with us. That was Menachem Pinkhof and another leader, Schuschu, from this training center, Joop Westerweel, I myself, Jan Smit, who was a social worker in Rotterdam, a Socialist...

SB: A non-Jew?

MP: Non-Jew, and Bouke Koning, also a non-Jew, who was the gardener who offered Menachem to hide in his house. With this little group we started to make a plan and in August 1942 this training center in Loosdrecht brought the first fifteen orders to report and to go to work camps. When this order came, that was for us a sign to hide the whole place. We said, "We can't decide only fifteen and the rest of them stay at home. This is the sign we all go in hiding." And during four days with this plan, with an address for every...

SB: Fifty? So you hid fifty people in that, in...

MP: Well, not only me. With this whole group.

SB: Yes, I understand.

MP: During four days all of them were hidden. And this was my project for the rest of the free time I was in Holland. Till March, 1943, I was still at home, legally, and

Menachem came to stay in my room, hidden, because he was already illegal then. But we lived still in our house in Loosdrecht because of the Germans always had exceptions and all people connected with diamond trade and diamond industry, they bought a special stamp. It was called the 120,000th stamp. With this stamp in your Jewish identity card, you can still stay at home. We were not allowed to go in the street after eight o'clock in the evening and we were not allowed to go about without the yellow star and we were not allowed to buy in non-Jewish shops and so on, all the regulations also were upon us. But, in March 1943, my grandmother was in hiding in a place that she was found by the Gestapo, and she was sent to Sobibor, and forty days later she was gassed. But we didn't know this. But she told the Gestapo about my sister, Ellie, and me, that we looked after her, that we brought ration cards and so on and so on, plus she, she thought this didn't harm. But then the Gestapo came to our house in Loosdrecht. My sister and I, we were warned, we were not at home, but then they took my father and my mother and Chaya and Mautje to Westerbork, to the camp. They had been there for half a year, then I managed to free them after half a year by bribing the Germans with black diamonds. And it worked. They were sent back to Amsterdam, not to Loosdrecht, to the Jewish Quarter in Amsterdam, and a few days later the Germans came again to pick them up a second time. But then they were warned, and they fled, and stayed in hiding till the end of the war. But then I no longer lived in my own place in Loosdrecht but I was all over Holland, changing addresses nearly every few days or week. And we did our illegal business as I mentioned, looking after all these young people from the training center in Loosdrecht who were in hiding. This was a day and night work. The places where they stayed became unsafe, either children talked too much in school or there was a neighbor who said, "I know you hide a Jew and if you don't send him away I'm going to report you." And all kinds of things happened then; people needed new addresses, non-stop, and they needed ration cards, and they needed new identity cards, false...

SB: Yes, of course.

Tape one, side two:

MP: Two years I worked as an illegal worker all over Holland, visiting these people and looking after new addresses, and so on and so on and so on.

SB: And then most of them were saved? Most of them were not picked up by the Nazis?

MP: We had a few big blows. The first was by the end of October, first of November, 1942. We felt that to keep them all, without time limits, hidden in Holland, that was next to impossible and we tried to find ways to flee out of Holland, over the borders, through Belgium and France to either Switzerland or to Spain. And here comes a very tragic story--that Joop Westerweel said he became [she means: obtained] a very reliable contact with people who could send people to Switzerland. It only was with a lot of money and he immediately had the bright idea--many Jews in Holland wanted such contacts--somebody who was able to pay, paid double, paid for one of our children--then children, today they are grandmothers and fathers...

SB: Sure.

MP: ... and the person himself. In this way we sent eight of our children off this way. They were brought by car to the Belgian border. There they were taken over by another car, which showed to be the Gestapo who brought them straight through Brussels to the camp, the transport camp in Mechelen, Malines. In Belgium everything has a Flemish and a French name. This camp was in Mechelen, or Malines. And four days later they all died in Auschwitz. When this came to our knowledge, a few weeks later, that these people were all trapped and did not come to Switzerland, this was a terrible blow. We were in a meeting in Rotterdam in the school of Joop Westerweel and I remember Joop was as white as chalk. My husband, who sent his own brother with these people, was crying like a baby. It was terrible. We were all in shock. And at this point we decided never again we shall go on these people where we have no knowledge exactly about every step how it goes on. And here Schuschu [Joachim Simon 1919-1943] started to try to find ways through Belgium and France to build up our own illegal way to let people escape to free countries. Schuschu came back. He first--he married not long before they went into hiding, in August, 1942. He first brought his wife to the Swiss border, and she stayed in Switzerland the rest of the war. He himself made contacts with the Jewish scouts in South France, with Jewish resistance movements, and when he came back the second or third time to Holland to bring these papers back to us, he was caught on the Belgian border, the Belgian-Dutch border, near Breda, he was in prison there, and the day after he was in the prison, he committed suicide. He wore glasses. He broke his glasses and with a piece of glass he cut his veins in his wrists. This was the second enormous blow because Schuschu was, with Menachem, they were the two leaders of all these people we kept in hiding. And he, being German like nearly all these children, and after experience of Dachau and imprisonment before 1938 when he came to Holland, he was so close to all of

us. His Hebrew name of Schuschu was Yachim and when my eldest son was born, there was no doubt his name was Jachin [Dutch version]. And then we went on with our illegal business. I stayed in Holland. Menachem started traveling now after Schuschu's death to Belgium and France and he met, at some point, he met in Brussels a friend of his who was a pupil together with him in the Jewish *Real* school in Amsterdam. And this friend, Avraham Hildesheim, told him about papers to travel from France to Holland and back again to France, as workers for the organization Todt, T-O-D-T. This organization was an enormous enterpriser for the German works, the west wall against the English. They were terribly afraid of an English invasion on the shores of France and they built their enormous fortifications--underground bunkers, bunkers, but also for airfields, military airfields. And they didn't mind so much what people were working there. I'm sure they knew about many hidden Jews working, but as long as they helped them work against the English and work for the Germans, they didn't care so much. So the search for illegal people was not so...

SB: Intense.

MP: Intense, and not so exact. The way Menachem found and handled lots of times was as follows: these, some of our people, worked, but I have to add still is that on top of this group of trainees from Loosdrecht, the whole movement, illegal movement, was extended by many other pioneers from other training centers who all wanted to go in hiding. And the whole organization came to somewhere next to 300 people. So we became a much bigger organization. Many of these elder people, pioneers, they already came to France, passing the borders from Belgium and France illegally, and started working because there hiding was easy if you were just a plain Dutch worker who helps to build fortifications against England. These people got from time to time permission to go back to their families for a few days--every half-year or year, I don't know exactly how much time--and we started to falsify. The people, they stole papers from the firms where they worked. It was not difficult because it was a *balagan*, [Hebrew-disorder] it was, they working. As long as they worked, they didn't mind anything else. With these papers from these firms and with false identity cards Menachem brought from Holland to France, our organization had a center in Paris. There they typed on the papers of the firms from the organization Todt, they typed out the names of these false identity cards of people still in Holland who wanted to come to France. With these papers Menachem went to the Gestapo in the Champs-Élysées, in Paris, and he became [meaning obtained] the permission for these people to travel to Holland to their families and come back again to France. In this way, Menachem organized transports of tens of people going together back to their work in southern France. They were all Jews, all brought to France, but not to the work place, but to the, next to the border with the Pyrénées, and in the meantime the people in Paris, Kurt Reilinger [phonetic], and other people, they had contacts with people passing the Pyrénées with their A.G.,¹ their, the French Jewish underground movements. Seventy of our people passed

¹This may refer to the A.J. (Armée Juive) an armed unit of the French Jewish resistance composed of several youth movements.

through the Pyrénées to Spain and came to Haifa and Atlit before the end of the war. And, well this was part of the people that managed to escape through France and through Spain to *Eretz Yisrael*.

SB: Now, please tell me, when you and your husband...

MP: Yes.

SB: When you were caught, when did the Germans finally destroy your organization?

MP: In spring 1944, Joop Westerweel, who brought Jewish people over the Dutch-Belgian border into Belgium, he was caught with two Jewish girls and with Bouke Koning, whom I mentioned already--with one of our non-Jewish illegal workers. They were caught by a stupid policeman, a Dutch man, who had a very poor family and just giving the Germans a Jew meant fifteen more guilders or something like that. And in this way, Joop and Bouke were sitting in prison in Eindhoven and the two Jewish girls, who were trainees of the Loosdrecht farm, they were sent to Westerbork and, except for Joop Westerweel, all three survived. The two girls came to Vught with the Philips *Kommando*, through Auschwitz and Reichenbach, ended up in Sweden and were liberated. Bouke Koning through Vught, was sent to other camps and was liberated in an *Aussenkommando* in Dachau, Gross Rosen. Terribly ill. It took him ten years to...

SB: Overcome?

MP: Recover from all these illnesses he got there. But he's alive, and he comes to Israel every year, nearly every year.

SB: And what happened to Westerweel?

MP: Westerweel, he, it turned out that he lived on a false identity card from a man who had murdered a German in the war and they were looking for this man. So they were very happy to find him. And when he learned this, he thought, "Well, then, my own identity is better than this from this [unclear] [probably the name on the false i.d.] whom they are looking for." And, then he said his own identity; it turned out that there was a big file waiting for him. He was accused of Communist activity and all kinds of things, non-existent. And he was imprisoned in the concentration camp of Vught, and we immediately started to try to find ways to free him. In Vught he was in contact with a political prisoner, a Dr. Steyns. This Dr. Steyns was a very brave man, and very anti-German, and he brought the little letters Joop wrote to us on his body. He took them out of the camp. He was allowed to have contact with people in hospitals, in Eindhoven and so on, and somehow, I don't know, we don't know how, but this Dr. Steyns was suspected by the Germans and when he had on his body this little letter with the whole plan of Joop how to escape, they found this on Dr. Steyns, he was immediately put into a bunker, and Joop was in a bunker already. That means they were in solit-...

SB: Solitary confinement.

MP: In solitary confinement, and they entered here a *Spion*...

SB: A spy.

MP: A spy. This spy came with this letter of Joop to the address where he had to deliver this and we saw this. And this man said, "I have connections. I can help you." That's how he entered into our...

SB: Circle.

MP: Circle. And on the day Joop was said to be freed, Menachem Pinkhof was with a trunk of clothing, in the railway station of Utrecht. There the Gestapo rounded him up and took him into prison. I was sitting in a place in den Haag [Hague] with a friend, where Joop would come afterwards, to look after him. That was the same day Menachem was caught on the railway station in Utrecht I was caught in this address in den Haag and sent to prison in the so-called Oranie Hotel in Scheveninger, which was a terrible German prison in those days. And after the, what do you call it, *HaKirut*, interrogations by the Germans, I was sent to another prison in Shertogenbosch, which was the environment of Vught concentration camp. Also Menachem was sent to Shertogenbosch after terrible interrogations with a pistol in his neck. They were interrogating him for four days. But in the end he was sent, without telling anything, to Westerbork, in the prison in Westerbork. And there people who knew us and knew what we had done all these years tried to free us, but they could not because the Germans kept a special eye on us, but managed to get us out of the prison and to put us, all falsifications, on the list of Palestine certificate possessors on a list to Bergen-Belsen. And that was the very best they could do for us. And I think they saved in this way our lives. Because otherwise we would have been brought to Auschwitz with a special recommendation that we should be gassed immediately. And that's how we came in 19th of May on the transport to Bergen-Belsen and were in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen.

SB: For how long?

MP: For the last year of the war.

SB: For an entire year?

MP: Yeah.

SB: And, about your experiences in Bergen-Belsen?

MP: About? [Pause] When we came to Bergen-Belsen, I remember at first, we were met at the railway station by *Sicherheitsdienst* [security service] who were in charge of the camp, and bloodhounds?

SB: Bloodhounds, dogs.

MP: Bloodhounds, they met us at the station. We had to walk with the little things we were allowed to take with us to the camp, a few kilometers. We had to walk in rows of five people. And in the end, when we came to the gates of Bergen-Belsen, I remember the first impression of the people on the other side, inside the camp. Their outlook out of their eyes was without contact. You couldn't find somebody you could look straight into his eyes. It was, they were dead, but walking. They weren't dead, but there was something, they were like ghosts. That was my first impression, and Menachem, who was wearing a cap when we walked into the camp, he did not take off his cap. He didn't

know yet. So, he was immediately put on the barbed wire. He had to stand there and was not allowed to get into the camp and not allowed to be arranged in one of the barracks. And he didn't get food. And part of his family was in prison in Bergen-Belsen, also on Palestine certificates. That meant being British subjects and being exchange material against Germans being imprisoned in Palestine and in England, and perhaps in Switzerland. I don't know. So we were exchange material. His father, his step-mother, his two sisters and a brother were all in this same camp, and also his grandmother. And this woman, who was imprisoned--his grandmother--in Bergen-Belsen, being already 73 years old, she was in camp from 73 to 75 years old. She came to Menachem with one millimeter slice of bread. That was my first encounter with his grandmother. And here in this camp I met his father and his two sisters and brother. Only two sisters stayed alive. And the grandmother was exchanged! But you want me to tell about the exchange?

SB: I, yes, tell me first a little bit about your life in Bergen-Belsen and then...

MP: This is something, I think it's impossible to give an impression of life in this camp, and especially after the exchange left the camp. The camp was divided in two. This was one-and-a-half months after we arrived in Bergen-Belsen. The camp was cut into two. Everybody had to sleep with somebody else in one bed. The food was cut into two. We got much less food. There was more beating and scolding and kicking, and, it was terrible. But, how to tell this, you can't tell it and compare it with anything you know in normal life. Perhaps I can tell about--I remember from time to time we had to go to the bathroom, which was a concrete building and in the ceiling there were...

SB: Microphones?

MP: No, douches.

SB: Showers.

MP: Showers. There we were...

SB: Gathered together?

MP: Gathered very...

SB: Close?

MP: Very close, with lots and lots of people, men and women and children, everything together. And, in one point, in December, November or December, I think it was already December '44, there came a transport that left Bergen-Belsen a few months earlier, all the *diamantaire* people, the "diamond people". They were sent from Bergen-Belsen to Auschwitz. And they were sent walking the death march back to Bergen-Belsen. I remember some of these people, how they left Bergen-Belsen, and they came back walking in; they were ghosts, they were skeletons. But they told us about the gas chambers in Auschwitz. And only then I knew what, by intuition, only we knew, that it was very bad, it was only then I knew for sure how the Jews were exterminated. After I had heard this I didn't want to go to the baths any more because I thought maybe gas comes out of the...

SB: Showers.

MP: Showers instead of water. I remember we were all shouted out of the barracks with sticks and everything. I did not, I stayed in bed. I laid very quiet in my bed, in a bunker bed, sort of...

SB: Level.

MP: Level, and there came a German with a stick and he poked in the beds to see if anybody was hiding. Then he saw me, and I, I made a very pitiful impression on him. He said, "Oh, this goes on through the *Knochenhaufen*, [pile of bones] into the, she will die tonight or tomorrow morning, and I needn't bother about this, this skeleton," as he thought me to be. So by a miracle I was saved. And this is one of the recollections. Another recollection is about people, the Jews from North Africa, from Tunisia. There was a Bengasi. [from Bengasi-seaport in eastern Libya] There was quite a lot of Oriental Jews from North Africa and they were very special. They had a man, Labi. He was a teacher. And he kept the children busy. They also were, I don't know how, but they were British subjects. And this Labi kept them walking in long rows and he had a stick and he kept them under control. Then there was--I forgot, a...

SB: An intermission? A recess?

MP: No-- Then there, then there were British fliers...

SB: There was a fly, yes, there was an air raid.

MP: A flier alarm.

SB: Yes, an air raid alarm.

MP: They all sat underneath the tables, that is their way, but then we went together to the baths place. I can't say it in the word "bathroom", because there is no such imagination with a bathroom, but this, to the shower place. Then we were all, they all compressed together, and these children from North Africa, they pinched our skin, our...

SB: Bottoms? [laughs]

MP: In our bottoms.

SB: [laughs]

MP: This I remember very sharp.

SB: Now, tell me about your exchange. How you, you said how you were exchanged at...

MP: No, I was not exchanged. First of all, our being there was totally illegal because we did not appear really on Palestine certificates, so we never could be called from Berlin on official lists for an exchange. But Menachem's grandmother was exchanged after this. Her daughter, Menachem's aunt, Clara Ascher Pinkhof, who, she is a writer of books and, therefore, many people know her, she and her mother were exchanged and came to Palestine before the end of the war. And after this exchange the camp was very much worsened in every aspect. They no longer looked upon us as exchange material. The real concentration camp in every respect.

SB: So then, you were in Bergen-Belsen until when?

MP: And I was in Bergen-Belsen until April 13, '45.

SB: What about--and your husband Menachem?

MP: Then, also. And then we were put into a train. It was not like the Liberation, but the Allied forces came nearer and nearer. It's just like a cat who is playing with his...

SB: Mouse?

MP: With his mouse. They put us in a train and wanted to keep us, and not to deliver us to the liberating forces. Only the very sick, who could not walk any more, could not stand on their feet any more, they were left in Bergen-Belsen. Menachem's sister, who stayed with me just now, she stayed in the camp, and also the other sister, half-sister. But we were put on a train, and this train was riding some days, and then stopping again, because there was no coal to keep the train...

SB: Moving.

MP: Moving. We had next to nothing to eat. When the train was standing, we sat underneath the train to do our pee pee and cahckie and when we could lay hand on some food on the way, we started cooking it also underneath the train. With some wood we tried to make a fire and I remember Menachem bringing some, some meat, horse meat. And I was busy. It was raining and the roof was very wet and, but somehow I think we ate it half cooked.

SB: [chuckles] And then--what finally happened after that?

MP: And then one day, we had been exactly fourteen days in this terrible train. The people died like flies from *Flecktyphus*...

SB: From dysentery?

MP: No, *Flecktyphus*, it's a kind of typhus that...

SB: Oh, that's the typhus.

MP: Typhus.

SB: Typhus then to-- Bedbugs.

MP: Yeah.

SB: Bedbugs? Yes, that's a typhus, yes.

MP: Then, after fourteen days suddenly there stands a Russian soldier next to the train and he tells in Russian that we are free. Then everybody who could walk, and we could still walk, we captured the village which was very near to the train. But there were a few hundred meters distance, and this village was Tröbitz, in eastern Germany. Today it's Germany. It was not too far from Leipzig. But the state of the people that all slowly took possession of this village was so terrible, and people went on dying from this *flecktyphus*...

SB: Typhus.

MP: That Menachem and I after four days decided to leave this place as soon as we could. Then Menachem made a report on the people that were in this place, Tröbitz, and we left, we stole, we called it--we didn't call it stealing but "organizing." We "organized" each of us a pair of bicycles and we started bicycling to the West. It took us exactly one month...

SB: Now how many people were you, it wasn't just you and Menachem?

MP: Oh yes.

SB: Just you and Menachem. And what happened to the others?

MP: And the others stayed in Tröbitz.

SB: I see.

MP: But then we passed the Elbe. Till the Elbe was Russian territory and the other side was American Zone. When we came to the American, there was a man in a, with a rowboat, a very small boat, who agreed to...

SB: Take you across?

MP: Take us across the Elbe. Then we came to the American Zone. I could tell you one recollection which is still very vivid in my mind. When we passed a few days through the Russian Zone, and we were hungry, we asked a Russian soldier for food. He had a loaf of bread. He broke it in two and gave us half of it. When we came to the American Zone, we came to a military government and Menachem handed the man this report about the people that were left behind and he also told him we were hungry. And we were hungry.

SB: I can imagine.

MP: This man looked at his watch and said, "Ah. It's eleven o'clock. At 1:00 lunch is served." On his table he had a piece of chocolate. I never in my life will forget this piece of chocolate. I was craving to have a piece of it. He didn't offer us anything. "Oh," he says, "I'm writing a letter home. Tell me about your experiences in that concentration camp." That was the first encounter with the Americans. But then he read this report. He said, "I will send a liaison officer and a Russian and an American in a jeep, travel together to Tröbitz." And they saw what they saw and saw that everything we had told them was the truth. "But," he said, "there is *flecktyphus* and you have to stay in custody because you can be carrier of this typhus. So we had to stay there for four days, though in very luxury circumstances. But we were not free and that annoyed us. But then there came a very young, a very nice American soldier who was a doctor, and he came with books. And Menachem said, "I can tell you everything about *flecktyphus*, because we experienced this for a whole year and I know everything about it." And he told him everything, and we were already free of lice and in clean clothes. And after four days we got a special recommendation for a special train leaving Leipzig to the West and then to pass through several Displaced Persons...

SB: Camps.

MP: Camps. And in every camp we had to flee, because we were not allowed to go on to the West. But we managed always to get on to some train or another, till we came to that DP Camp in Luxembourg, in Mersch. And my father had an office, a diamond trading office in Antwerp and his bookkeeper lived in Antwerp. So I wrote, we went out in the street in Mersch in Luxembourg and I asked a man in the street if he could give us one *franc*, a Belgian *franc*, money, to buy a postcard.

MIRJAM PINKHOF [1-2-18]

Tape two, side one:

SB: You had asked here that you wanted a franc for a post card. What happened after that?

MP: This was a nice man and he said, "I'll give you two francs and you can buy something for one franc what you like." And we wrote a post card to this man in Antwerp and two days later we got a telegram. We were called from the camp to the office of the Bürgermeister. He gave us a telegram from this Mr. Cox saying that all my family was safe and sound and he would send his son the next day to bring us money and take us to Antwerp. And I remember, Menachem--this was a place you had to go up the stairs, from two sides you could come up and then there was the office. And he came out of the door and jumped all the way down, for joy, that the whole family in Loosdrecht was safe and sound and that we had contact with the world outside, which was completely new. In the end we had contact with home. And here I want to add what just struck me a few days ago--how rich we were that we had a home to go back to. We didn't yet know how this home was looking, if it was still standing, and so on. But we had an address to go to. And all these other people we were together with, who came from Germany to Holland as refugees after the Crystal Night, and they also, all of them, wanted to come back to Holland, not to Germany.

SB: Of course not.

MP: And the Dutch people at the border, they treated them awful. They said, "You are Germans," and they were put in a camp together with German prisoners of war and people that cooperated with the Germans, Dutch people; it was terrible. But all these people wanted to go back to Holland and they did not have a home. They had to go back to see a place, as was in those days a book by Victor Gollancz, *Nowhere to Lay Their Heads*. [NY, 1945] This was describing how people that came from the displaced persons camps to the country they wanted to come to, but they did not have a home. But people, rich people, we know exactly where to go to, we know where we came from, being Dutch people that lived there for many generations. And, well, the next day the son of this man came to us, two days later, and he was a painter, Jan Cox, he was even a famous painter. He's no more alive. He committed suicide some twenty years ago or ten years ago. When he came into this displaced persons camp he closed his nose with his fingers and he said, "Come with me as quick as possible; leave all these dirty things, all this junk; leave it here; come with me!" He took us on a train to Brussels, where he lived, and he took us to a place on the boulevard to eat strawberries with cream, whipped cream. This was the summit of pleasure, of freedom. Never in my life had I tasted strawberries with cream like those strawberries. And he took us to his parents' home in Antwerp and there we stayed for, I think, two more days. But we wanted to go home but nobody was allowed to enter Holland

because in Holland people died after this terrible hunger winter, and many corpses were in the water, and there was...

SB: Contaminated water.

MP: Contaminated water, and besides, there was not enough food in Holland, so nobody was allowed to enter Holland, but Menachem said, "Well, I have crossed the Dutch border between Holland and Belgium so many times illegal; we will pass it this time, too." So we set out in a little train to the border, then we left the train and set out on foot to cross this border illegally and we were in the middle--we didn't pay too much attention to keep ourselves secret and soon a Dutch policeman spotted us and arrested us. We were so happy to be in Dutch hands...

SB: [laughing]

MP: ... that we could embrace this policeman. But he was very cautious because, also German people that were spies and all kinds of people, he didn't know who we were, so he took us to a police station and what I remember is, we were put in a stable, sleeping on straw, because they didn't have enough room in the station, and we were interrogated, politically, because we had no identity on us; we were nobody, and we could tell anything to this policeman. So we were interrogated and we told them about the Jews in Bergen-Belsen and all the terrible things that had happened there and they soon believed us. And then we underwent a medical interrogation, examination, and the doctor said to me, "Well, you know that you are pregnant?" And I said, "I, pregnant?", I haven't been...

SB: Together with my husband [laughing].

MP: ... menstruating for more than a year, so this is totally impossible; this can't be; and I laughed at this man. But he was right, but I only found out months later. And from this station, the next day, we were sent to Eindhoven, which is a big place and a big center for people that came back to Holland. It was in the buildings of Philips. Philips has done a lot of good in the war time. They also saved all of their...

SB: Employees.

MP: Jewish employees in special Kommandos, the Philips Kommandos. They worked for Siemens and for Agfa and all--not all, but most of these people were always treated, in the camps, with special conditions. And most of them were saved by the Philips concern. So Philips now had big halls where--usually they had warehouses which were empty and they put mattresses on the floors, and here people were staying. And from a place was transferred into a big kitchen, cooking for all these people. So, and this place was the most terrible place for me, not physically, but in this Eindhoven, in this Philips buildings, the Jews were concentrated and were already free since the end of September, 1944, when the south of Holland was freed, and they knew about the fate of most people that were deported, here they heard. I heard for the first time that my friend Joop Westerweel was executed, shot dead, on the 11th of August, 1944. I didn't know yet; I knew nothing. There we heard all about the family of my husband Menachem Pinkhof that were murdered in--oh, in different camps. Here we heard all these terrible things and I was

feeling terrible. I was vomiting most of the time, not knowing that I was pregnant, so this had to do with it a good deal. And I only wanted to go home to Loosdrecht. And after a few days, or perhaps a week, I have no idea exactly how long--this was a dreadful experience in this place, Eindhoven--then the people that came back from concentration camps, they were allowed to go. They were taken by buses because the trains didn't work. The bridges were all...

SB: Bombed out.

MP: Bombed out, and the busses passed on bridges that were only temporary. So the bus took us to Loosdrecht. We saw all the terrible bombings and the...

SB: The destruction.

MP: The destruction of part of the cities we came through. In the end we were put out of the bus at the corner of our--I can't say road because it was a sandtrack--where we lived, and that's why the bus didn't go in and deliver us at the house, but at the corner. The first I saw was a policeman from Loosdrecht on his bicycle and when he saw us, he literally fell off his bicycle. He said, "Eh? You came back?" with the intonation of a man, "I pity you. I was so sorry for you to be dead in a concentration camp, and now you came back, you spoil all my feelings." That was the message I got from his, "You came back?" He was not...

SB: He was not being nice to...

MP: He was not too pleased that we came back. But then we came home; my mother was home, Chaya was home, and my brother Maurits was home, and my father was home. And the joy was, they didn't know anything about us. They didn't get any information, not from Belgium, because all the communications were broken off; and the brother who was in Canada, in the R.A.F. as a pilot, he came after a few days, for a few hours home; so all the family was reunited.

SB: Amazing!

MP: My father was very nervous because we had no bed to sleep on in our home and I saw in the garage where I had been living, there were lots of furniture, also beds and things we could take it in. "No, no," he said, "This belongs to NSBers, the people that worked with the Germans who had lived in our home and we are not allowed to touch this." I said, "Now you are telling me that I sleep on the floor and here is furniture. Don't be too silly." And we took out beds for ourselves and a cupboard and a table and a few chairs, and then we made ourselves comfortable. But this was the mood into which we came back. Then it turned out that in a real examination, that my husband was ill with pleurisy; his lungs were full...

SB: Full of mucus, yes.

MP: And he had to lie flat in bed. He was examined every few weeks.

SB: Was that pleurisy, or was it...

MP: Pleurisy.

SB: It wasn't tuberculosis. It was pleurisy.

MP: It was pleurisy, and in 1960, here in Israel, he got tuberculosis.

SB: Is that so?

MP: Yes. And there we were. I turned out to be pregnant. My husband was ill, and had to keep absolute bed rest but, nevertheless, he started, from his bed, to reorganize the Zionist activities, which started to print a kind of paper, a Zionist Davar Hachalutzim, the official paper for all the Chalutzim, the pioneers, that came back to Holland. There was one enormous help, that was the "Jewish Brigade" that came to Holland. They were part of the British Army, a special contingent, what do you call it, a unit from Palestine, and they had money, they had printing facilities, they had automobiles, and with them together, my husband started organizing the illegal aliya back to Palestine through France. It was a very hectic life, as usual, from our home. This was a very big place. I think I told you at the very beginning that we had a big farm, with...

SB: Yes.

MP: ... several buildings, and in one of these buildings the people were gathered and were put into uniforms from the "Jewish Brigade," but they didn't have enough uniforms, so at the back of the car they had to appear as being real soldiers, so some were in trousers, and some...

SB: [laughs]

MP: were in blouses, some had only a cap on their heads, and at the end it had to make the impression of...

SB: Of a large contingent.

MP: Yeah, and these autos took those pioneers to France where they had several camps where they were gathered, until a ship was chartered through the Joint and then they were taken to Marseilles and to Palestine and we were desperately wanting to go with them but the leaders of Aliya Bet, the illegal immigration, they said, "You are pregnant; he's ill; we don't take you." And this was such a disappointment for us. But after years, when we learned what happened to all these illegal immigrants often being sent back to Cyprus, and imprisoned again, and others that were in Atlit and also imprisoned, and the prison was set free by the Haganah, and people had to walk from Atlit to Bet Oren, through the mountains, then I understood that it was not such a simple business. And we had to wait until the first certificates came to Holland from Palestine, from the English Immigration Office, and in the meantime my son was--first of all we were married officially, also for the Dutch law and also before a Jewish rabbi, and then in February my son was born, Jachin, who is now 45 years old. We had to have three certificates--for the two of us, and my son--and we got them at the end of April and we left Holland for Palestine. We traveled, the KLM flew till Cairo, and there was no Lydda (or Lod) airport for big airplanes. And in Cairo we stayed, I think, for two more days, and then we came on a train for Tel Aviv. This train passed through all of Sinai, through Kantara [Egyptian border town] we passed the border, British border--it was British territory, Palestine. And I remember many soldiers were on this train,

and there was war in Palestine; there were always--what do you call these uprisings--there were always...

SB: Arab riots, are you talking about?

MP: Yes, Arab riots, and the British had to keep order, and these soldiers saw two young people with a just born baby, and they said, "You are going to Palestine? Are you mad? Take the first train back."

SB: [laughs]

MP: "Go home." And that was how we were on our way to Palestine. But we knew exactly what we wanted, and in Rehovot we were met by an uncle of Menachem who lived in Tel Aviv with his wife, and they said, "No, stay on the train." And we go, and they joined us, and in Tel Aviv we went off the train. The train went on to Haifa. And not only to Haifa--the train went on from Cairo to Lebanon, to Beirut, and to Damasek [Damascus]. But we went off in Tel Aviv, and this family of Menachem had prepared a welcome that is impossible to tell. Everything for a baby, everything for a sick person. But this uncle, as people of his generation, were terribly frightened by somebody being sick with his lungs because tuberculosis, in those days, was contagious and many people died from it.

SB: Yes, it was very serious.

MP: Today it's different, but he did not want Menachem to stay in his home, and they arranged already a convalescent home for people being ill with tuberculosis. And I was with the baby staying with them and my husband was not too far away in a recovery home for people with lung diseases. But I did not want to stay with them in Tel Aviv, in Bnei-Brak, I wanted to go to a kibbutz. We were idealists and we wanted to join a kibbutz. And I want--our son was called after "Schuschu", whose Hebrew name was Jachin, and my son was called Jachin--and I wanted to join the kibbutz Na'am, where the widow of Schuschu was staying. And they were only too happy to receive us. She remarried Uri Kochba, who was in Holland once a shaliach [delegate]. He was sent from Palestine, from the Hehalutz Party, and Mapai Party, and they received me with the baby in Na'am. But it was in those days you did not look after your own baby. He was in a baby home, and in this baby home, the people decided I had to give my son bottle feeding because he did not gain enough. And I wanted to breast-feed him and they insisted on bottle feeding. So I said, "You can tell me whatever you like." I took my baby under my arm and I had contacted a man in Ramatayim, which is today Hod-Hasharon, and he said, "Oh, if you want to come, come." And I went on the bus and traveled to Hod-Hasharon with the baby. His wife was not at home but he was a friend of my parents. He was also in the diamond business in Tel Aviv, a real Zionist. He did not have a bed for the baby so we took, there were from tin, the long, narrow tubs, for washing.

SB: Right.

MP: And in such a tub I made a bed for the baby. And he had a woman who looked after the household and she cooked for us. It was perfect. So, it was very close to where Menachem was staying in this convalescent home. And after a short time, in August,

he was allowed to leave that home. He was declared healthy. And, oh, what I forgot to tell you, when we were still in Loosdrecht, Menachem was lying in bed, ill. Very shortly after we came back home, must have been June or July, there came a woman, short woman with a coat, a fur coat. She looked like a little ball and I thought a very interesting person. She came from Palestine, she was a journalist, a journalist for the Mapai Party, and she was a journalist for... [tape ends]

MP: ... Menachem left the recovery at the hospital and declared healthy, he started to look for a job. And he got an offer in Jerusalem, and the Dutch immigrants organization which was under the direction of a couple, De Leeuw, Leib De Leeuw and Mirjam De Leeuw, they wanted us to come to Jerusalem, to be close to them. Everybody knew already about our illegal...

SB: Activity.

MP: Activities, and besides, we were between the first ones to come to Palestine; not so many people yet came. And we were looked upon like one of the world wonders, having survived all these experiences. And Menachem also got an offer in Haifa and also in Tel Aviv. And then Menachem said, "To tell you the truth, I like Haifa best, but you have to come and see for yourself." And in Haifa, in the Rechov Vitkin [street] there was a couple, a Dutch couple, Araten. He was a chemical engineer, and they had a little room in the garden, next to the garage. And they said, "This room was occupied by one of Menachem's friends who was an arbiter." He worked for an arbiting firm, bookkeeping and business management and so on, and he had to be in Tel Aviv for four days. So he said, "I shall be four days in Tel Aviv so you can have my room in Haifa for four days and then Mirjam can see what she thinks about it." We took all our luggage because I think if Menachem likes it in Haifa, I think I will like it too. We came there for four days, and again this family had told that we were coming and other Dutch people came to see us and to hear our stories, and this man said, "Well, they are here, but in four days' time they have to leave us." And then one man came and he said, "Your wife is in Holland at the moment! You have a lot of room in your house! Take them!" And then we stayed in the building in that Kikar Horev, Horev Square. And to make a long story short, we never left Haifa since then. We came for four days, and it's now forty-five years that I am in Haifa.

SB: [laughs]

MP: I'm not planning to leave neither today!

SB: [laughs]

MP: Now, you tell me how far do you want me...

SB: That's it. That's more than, that's the end. How do you stop this?