

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Germans in Holland during 1940-1950

Personal Experiences

O. H. 552

SIMON JONGELING

Interviewed

by

Thomas Hess

on

December 30, 1975

SIMON CORNELIS JONGELING

Simon Cornelis Jongeling was born in Albasserdam, the Netherlands, on April 2, 1924, the son of William and Maartje Jongeling. Simon lived in the town of Alblasserdam, which is approximately twelve miles south of Rotterdam, until 1948. While in the Netherlands, Simon Jongeling lived through the German Nazis' occupation of that country in 1939-1944. Pursued by the German Gestapo for minor offenses, Simon joined the Dutch resistance and went underground during the latter stages of World War II. After the allied liberation, he joined the Royal Dutch Army in 1944 and served in that capacity until 1948. Upon completion of his term of service, Simon was employed by the Royal Dutch Shell Company from 1949 to 1954. In 1955 he and his wife immigrated to the United States and he was employed by the General Motors Fisher Body plant in Lords-town, Ohio. He and his wife are the parents of a son, Ronald, born in 1957. Due to his experiences with the German Nazis, Simon continues to harbor ill feelings toward the German people.

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INTERVIEWEE: SIMON JONGELING

INTERVIEWER: Thomas Hess

SUBJECT: German invasion of Holland, Brutality, Hatred,
Reprisals

DATE: December 30, 1975

H: This is an interview for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program with Simon Jongeling taken at his home, 3670 Sandburg Drive in Austintown, on the evening of December 30, 1975.

J: I was born April 2, 1924 in Alblasserdam, Netherlands. I went to school until I was fifteen years old. When I came out of school, I started working as an apprentice toolmaker. I went to night school. When I was sixteen years old, the 10th of May or was it the 14th of May? When did the war start?

*JJ: The tenth of May. The 14th it was over because it lasted only four days.

J: Okay, the 10th of May the war started. Now, I personally never thought that it would start--I mean that the Germans would come into Holland. I never thought it would happen, but to the contrary, my wife's father thought it all along. He was in the army and he thought that they would start, that they would include Holland into the war, that they wouldn't just leave it out like they did in 1918. We were under the impression as was my father that they would never dare take Holland. That is one of the things that stood out in my mind. When we woke up in the morning . . . My father was a night watchman at a shipyard. When he came home, the planes came over dropping--we didn't see them at that time--paratroopers. We didn't see them doing that at that particular time. We saw the planes coming over low. We thought it was war. My father came walking home and we were standing outside, and they were flying over. Well, we lived on a dike on a crossing

*Jozina Jongeling--Mr. Jongeling's wife.

of three rivers. When you went on the dike, you could see when they were over the houses that they dropped the paratroopers. So you knew then, of course, that the war started.

It was daylight. It was about six o'clock in the morning that we saw it. We had heard a lot of planes going over, but you didn't pay any attention to it really. My older sister was married the day before. We lived in Kinderdyk and they lived in the town of Alblasserdam. That was bombed right away because it had a big important bridge over the river.

They didn't blow up the bridge then; they bombed the town itself. My brother and I went to look for them but we couldn't find them because they had left their home. They went to a mill, a windmill where they had found shelter, and that is where they stayed with all of the other people.

That actually was how we were introduced to the war and also to the viciousness of the war because we couldn't go over the dike. The dike went all along the river. It connected our town of Kinderdyk with the town of Alblasserdam, where my sister was supposed to live. We couldn't go there because on the other side they had dropped the paratroopers and they were shooting from that side, anything that moved over that dike. So we went inside there, inside. You could go another way but it was longer and it was more narrow; no cars could go over there, just bicycles. So we went there, and we had no trouble, but when we went back, these fighter planes from the Germans, came low over and strafed the people with their machine guns. I mean they were just not destroyed . . . It was the second day of the war that they did that. It was not just something that came later, they did that on the 11th of May. So at that time, of course, we had already had a little lesson of who they were and what they were going to do. We were, of course, right away very angry at them.

You have to realize that the distance isn't all that small. We lived about twelve miles south of Rotterdam. If you looked off of the river, you could see Rotterdam. If you are on the point, you could see Rotterdam on the other side. You could see also how it was bombed and how it was burning. That was bombed pretty well to nothing.

The center of town, yes of course. Well, that is what it was all about, the center of town. You don't take the outlying areas because it doesn't do you any good at first. All they were after was to create havoc, to create panic, and to get to the Dutch government. Three

days was too long; they didn't want it to last three days. So the fourth day they capitulated. When you saw them coming in, the troops themselves . . . When I saw them for the first time in Alblasserdam, I was just very angry that is all there was to it. I was just plain angry, as little as I was--sixteen years old. In the beginning, they tried to have as much cooperation from the Dutch people as possible. In other words, they left them in place. All they would do was make certain laws or whatever you want to call it. They would be posted on the boards by your own civil authorities, like the mayor or the town council. When you saw these names you would partly obey because they were your own; you would partly do as they would tell you. It wasn't really strict rules which they put in the beginning, the first couple of months. Later on, when they wanted more concessions of the Dutch authorities . . . I can only speak about the authorities where I come from. I can only speak about those two towns really because that is where I grew up; that is where I lived.

There was a lot of industry, that is why we had a lot to do with these guys. We were at a very strategic point, three rivers came together. Where the Rhine came from Germany, it was about twelve miles south of Rotterdam. You got all the rivers coming in from the other side. Then those together go to Rotterdam. That particular point is very strategic because of the shipping that goes through here. All of the factories got all that along that river because it had easy access to roads and shipping. Machine shops and a lot of stuff were being shipped by boat because of ports that they had.

Later on, a couple of months later, they wanted more concessions off of the Dutch government officials in these two towns and they were removed. So you had first, resistance from these people, and then when the Germans didn't go along with that, they would remove them. Not send them to jail, yet, that didn't happen. They would just remove them and give you a new mayor which was more to their liking. They would get a town clerk, for instance somebody who was affiliated with the Nazi party in Holland. In 1943, when I left, it was a party member. As we knew him before the war, he was not a bad guy, what we consider a bad guy. Later on he changed because he didn't want to lose his job. He liked it but he had control. He started doing what he was told to do. For instance when my brother . . . I am skipping again, maybe a couple of years, because I can only come up with these things that stand out in my mind.

I went to school, and in the beginning, you had to black out your lights on your bicycle. You had little altercations then, you know. Especially with these guys who came in as

totally strangers, they didn't belong in your country. They said they were the super race. That is why I got into more trouble than maybe someone else would. The fact remained however that if you did not do exactly as they told you, they got you. They got you on no uncertain terms. They would knock the daylight out of you or, in the case of my brother, took him to jail. They took him to a concentration camp, and he was not the only one. There were more people who went to concentration camps. There were more people that got their teeth knocked out. Just a little resistance would create a little brutality, more resistance would create more brutality, et cetera. It was a ball that got growing of course. The older you got and the longer they were there, the more you started resisting, and the more they got on to you.

I think it was 1941 when we had the first round up of Jews in Holland. Again we did not know what the consequences would be when we did what we did.

First, they put a start on the Jews, of course. But we were and we still are, very sympathetic to the Jewish people. Why? We had a lot of them in Holland; they were good for business. For the little man, they were good for business in Holland. You could go there, and they would always give a fair shake regardless of what they say here. Here the Jew had a bad name, in Holland he did not. We were not really prejudice at all.

The community I lived in, we got along very well. When they first started rounding up, the first round-up of the Jews, we had a strike. In essence of inexperience, I took myself walking around and going to all kinds of factories all along on the bike. You could just walk out all along the dike. Shut them all down, go in there, ask the people to move, to get out, and they did. One thing is that it was all spontaneous. That same day, in the afternoon, the people who printed up the little leaflets, three of ours--guys that I knew--got picked up and got shot. Now I did not print anything up. We just went in there and got them out. The people who were still working, we asked them to leave, to participate in the strike and they did. But the guys my own age who were in the office, who could get their hands on a machine to print to make copies, they did it and they got killed for it. Just for something simple like that. Because what was it really? All they did was typewrite a note that you should go out and what the Germans did to the Jews and that we shouldn't take it. As Dutch citizens, all they did was make up a little note and distributed it, and they were killed for it; they were shot. This was the first encounter really where it was heart against heart,

where you really said, "Well, this is it." Before that, you would do maybe a lot of things which you really didn't think were that bad. We had done things which were worse than that one before. Just picking up a couple of leaflets, we got away with it because nobody ever thought anything about it. You just wanted to show them that you were against them. That is what these people who made these leaflets up wanted to show too, but they got killed for it.

Why my brother went in a concentration camp was because he didn't want to work for the Germans. He was there; he was picked up. He escaped, and came back to Holland. He went underground and they caught him. The story of how he was caught is mostly hearsay. I don't know that. They have never proven, that I can say . . . It is supposed to be that another woman's son had to go to Germany. She went to the police and said, "Well, why doesn't he have to go?" If it hadn't been for that, of course he could have escaped. When she went to the authorities, they arrested him and took him away. He went to a concentration camp, first in Holland, and then they shipped him out to Germany.

JJ: I thought that was very bad.

J: Sure it was bad, but again, the woman was never brought to trial or whatever--to make anything out of it, that is what I'm trying to say. I cannot say that it was so, but they said it was so. Now my brother never said anything about that.

JJ: But he never talked about the concentration camp. He married a German girl while he was in Germany working for a family. He met a girl there.

J: He had been in a full security concentration camp at first, and then from there they transported him. I don't know how long he was there.

I went there a while and tried to get some kind of contact, and I couldn't get any contact at all. They transferred him to Germany, and when he was in Germany in a concentration camp . . . After a while they let him out during the day and he had to work in a garage fixing trucks for the German army. He had to work on that. It was a garage that was owned by Blattner. They had somebody working for him. Well, anyway, he was, of course, all bones. The girl that worked for the family upstairs gave him food and that is how he got connected with that girl. Then after the war they married. Her whole family was very anti-Hitler. That is how the story goes.

I have not been there. I can only talk now about what I

see, what I went through. In 1943 when they starting rounding up everybody in my age group, I had to go underground. There is very little to talk about that, except you did everything during the night, in the dark. Whatever you had to do, you did in the dark. In the underground, when the bigger guys had dropped, for instance, a food stamp agency to get food, we--the little guys--would bring it to various addresses. Or they would slaughter a cow and we would deliver stuff around. We were more or less little messenger boys in my age bracket. You know what I mean? The bigger guys did the big jobs. That is all I can say.

When the south was free, I went to Brabant. I went to the south. From there I went to Belgium, and from there I went to England. That is where I got my military training. Now, of course, that is a very short story over four years, or three and a half years, but what else is there to say. You lived every day and after a while every day was almost the same. It is not much of a story that I can see. We were always in fear of being caught. Life was miserable, not enough food, not enough clothes. But that is all so far behind to what it is now. Let's face it now.

H: You said you apprenticed as a toolmaker?

J: Yes.

H: Is that what they wanted you to do?

J: No, this was mine; this was before the war. My brother was a toolmaker and I wanted to be one. He just served his apprenticeship and was already in. That was why they could use him earlier than me. I wasn't a full-fledged toolmaker at that time. He was, and that is why they could use him. Later on, they could use me; that is why they were after me. But as long as we were apprentices, and went to school at night, they wouldn't touch you.

H: Then did they use those fellows there in Holland or did they take them into Germany to use them?

J: They took them to Germany.

JJ: When you were a certain age, then you had to go there.

J: They took all of the equipment out because there was a lot of sabotage going on in Holland too, you have to realize. The place here I worked had a big machine shop but it was really a shipyard where they could build their own diesel and steam engines. The Germans wanted the ships; when they came in Holland they wanted these

things finished. What they did was never done. They put the whole superstructure on that thing, on the ground, so when they let it in the water, they knew what was going to happen. It capsized. There was no argument that it was pure sabotage. Then there were other guys for instance who brought in some vessels, some war ships, some smaller war ships--not the real big ones; they never came to Holland. It could happen that all of a sudden a big hole was in the hull because somebody would plant a mine against the boat or what have you. Now these things happened constantly--all kinds of acts of sabotage--so they said, "Hey, we are not going to put up with that anymore. We will just take all of the equipment out," which they did. They took all of the equipment out of there, the factories, and shipped it to Germany. They said, "Enough with this stuff. Let's take the guys too." Before that, guys went to Germany too, but it was on a voluntary basis. Some were forced, who didn't have a trade or just manual labor which they could do, to Germany or someplace else to build all kinds of fortifications or what have you. Still people came around, because when they saw there was no use having these factories in Holland anymore, that everything was not being finished; anyway, they took it to Germany. The sabotage was especially where I came from pretty big. Tools, shipping . . . But the guys that did it were never found that I know of.

JJ: No, the underground would hide them from the Germans. If they could not find the guilty, they [the Germans] would take as a reprisal all of the men of a certain age group. They took all of the men out of the small town Putten. Very few of the men folk from that place came back. That was the reprisal from the Germans. I think we thought at the time it was dumb. I can remember my dad telling me that that wouldn't make any difference, ending the war earlier or not. Making the Germans change their attitude . . . As a matter of fact, you made the Germans more hard toward you.

J: This is all hindsight of course, because you have to realize one thing. Before they took all of the male population out of the town, they would have never done it . . . Now when they kill these high-ranking German officers, don't forget they were the officers who were the toughest, who were the most brutal.

JJ: But they had so many replacements for them that one or two or three did not make any difference really.

J: It is easy to say you shouldn't have done that because look what they do now. That has never happened before, that is what I am saying. But don't forget we, as a whole, are people who are inexperienced in that type

of warfare. A lot of that came out of anger. A lot of that, if they did something to you, you weren't going to take it. That is all there was to it.

JJ: The Dutch could have been better prepared where the Germans were up to. They did it in Belgium in the 1914-1918 war. They were terrible. You ask any Belgian people. In Holland, you remember how many Belgian people we had in our country. I was not born at that time, but I know some people who came when they were small and they stayed; they never went back to Belgium again. They could tell you stories what the Germans did at that time.

J: Still, I say, we did not believe in the beginning that they would do what they did. You see it wasn't heard of. First of all, nobody in Holland ever got killed by somebody else. A plain murder in Holland was unheard of. There were very few.

JJ: They were few and far between.

J: What I am trying to say is, that that was something we did not think of. Somebody would take their life.

H: For sinking a ship.

JJ: Or printing pamphlets, or listening to the radio show from England. If they caught you with a radio . . .

J: You couldn't have your radio anymore. We had two radios. One of them was brought to the collection place of radios. The old one was brought to the Germans and the newest one went upstairs in the closet. You listened to Radio Free Europe. No, it was the B.B.C. They called it radio orange, when the B.B.C. was transmitting in Dutch. What they said from there, you would believe. That was the law. That was the word. Whatever they said, you would believe.

JJ: You wanted to believe it because it was always good news.

J: What they said, you would believe. Now the Germans could tell you the truth maybe and you wouldn't believe it.

JJ: You just mistrusted them for so long that no matter what they told you, you didn't believe it.

J: Right. So your whole way of life was sometimes for security. You didn't believe the authorities that were there. We were very skeptical of the Germans, very skeptical of what they said. In the beginning, we did not believe--I did not believe and the people who were with me--that they would kill just because you did something that maybe they found out or heard that you did.

- H: You said something about a lot of the people not believing that Holland would be invaded. Now we know that in 1914 they weren't invaded that there were different reasons then.
- J: But you see, we did not see that. I said we thought we were under the false impression again. You have to be able to put yourself into that frame of mind that we had at that time. First of all, I think we were pretty proud. Like the people I associated with, they were very proud. We thought that by inundate, certain parts of Holland you could inundate. That you could stop Germany for quite a while, that that would not be worth the trouble, going through it, that it would be worth more for them to have another seaport because Rotterdam is very strategic, very strategic. Of course, you say I should have known that, how important it was to them. But we thought that it was more important for them to have it as a free port actually, a communications port. I would have to say, me and my friends and my immediate family . . . Now there are people who believe this. I did not, and my family did not believe that they would do it, that is what I am saying.
- JJ: My father thought that they would shoot, but he said that they never leave that coastline open.
- J: They did it in 1914-1918. That is why I said we were wrong. We don't argue that.
- JJ: They came from both sides with different weapons.
- J: Yes, but as I said, and why I said it was because they could inundate Holland on several points and stop them. You never lived under the impression that they would drop the whole army behind those points. That is what they did.
- H: That is what I wanted to ask you. They made it impossible to flood the area.
- J: Sure. The first thing that they did because they knew.
- JJ: A surprise attack too. Yes, well a surprise attack for us, not a surprise attack for the Dutch government. They knew it was coming but they didn't know what day.
- J: Afterwards, they knew it, we did not. To us it was a complete surprise. They had all of the soldiers which were of any value behind the line. The first thing they went for was Rotterdam. That was the first thing that they went for. They couldn't get it because it was pretty well defended. They couldn't get the available manpower

there. It was no use any more at that time to inundate the country because . . .

JJ: They bombed the heart out of it, and they would have done it in each and every place where they thought it was necessary.

J: Sure they would, because it took too long already to win this operation. At that time, and I am strictly talking about that time, we didn't know what they were trying to do or what they were after. We thought that we could hold them off for quite a while.

H: Was there any, what you would say, high command to the underground, any central leadership?

J: Yes, there were various factions. I was affiliated with Trouw. Trouw is a Dutch Reform Group that belong to the Dutch reform church, although I didn't belong to that. We were affiliated with that part of the underground. In other words, they got me a place. Ironically, I was underground, but my parents also had a guy from another town in their house being underground. They came from the same organization. You were being supplied good food by that organization. In Amsterdam, there was a big communistic organization, which was a good organization too by the way, for the fight against the Germans. You have to realize of course that each had their own contacts of course. There was cooperation between the two at certain levels. But there were too many groups, I would say.

H: The communist group and Trouw?

J: Yes, that I know of. Starting out it was more the communist group. What was the newspaperer they brought out after the war?

Trouw means true to the government. You got a big newspaper after the war, one of the biggest newspapers in Holland. The Daily Trouw, right? That was a big factor there, of course, because of all the churches which were not Catholic came to that particular group and supported that group. While the socialist and the communists stuck to one group which was headed by the communists, there was no doubt about that. At that time there were two big groups.

H: Now you kind of indicated that that Catholic church was not included in Trouw?

J: No, the Catholic church was only big in the south of Holland, the two southern provinces which are Limberg and Brabant in the south. We were pretty well separated from that. We were pretty well separated as a people.

In other words, the rest of Holland, there are very few Catholics, and we just didn't bother with them; we didn't have any connections with them. It was just something that didn't belong to us.

I personally do know very little about that part until after the war, of course. Through the south of Holland, they did have quite a bit of resistance. We know they did, but we definitely were not a part of it. We were another group. We were in the south of Holland. That is a province. South Holland is a province which is the most industrialized part of Holland. I would say that 90% is Protestant.

JJ: I think the Trouw group was more fanatic against the Germans than any other group. Don't you think so?

J: Now the communists were busy fanatics too because when you come right down to it, the communists started in Amsterdam at the dock strike; they did it. The dock strike against the removal of the Jews, the first Jewish round-up, we took it over, because there was cooperation. We took it over more south and that was Trouw. Trouw was vicious later on because of what happened to some of the people and in a big part to what happened to the Jews. See, the Jews themselves had a lot to do with it. What happened to the rest of Holland was because they were Dutch people, you had to realize that. They were not Jews as Jews go. They were Dutch people.

H: So they went to their own church, the Jewish church?

J: Synagogue.

JJ: They had their own religion.

J: Plenty of them didn't at all. Just because their great grandfather was a Jew maybe, then they were thought of as a Jew. It didn't mean that they were Jewish; they could be Protestant.

H: Now what happened to these people?

J: They went through the same experience.

H: They were Jews?

J: They were Jews. You were traced very far back. You are a Jew, it doesn't matter if you were a practicing Jew or not.

There were people who didn't know that they were Jewish and they were Jewish. Because a lot of people didn't,

they didn't stand still by the fact that they were Jewish. Mr. Friedman is very high up on this because, first of all, he is Jewish, second, he is a historian. He wants to know all about it. He goes very much after it. He is very well aware of everything that has ever happened to him. While the common people that I work with . . . Now, of course, there aren't that many people that you work with who are Jewish because most of them are in business. But the people that you talked to, that you had daily contact with, although they were Jewish, some of them didn't know even themselves that they were Jews. Because nobody paid attention to that.

I am not talking about the fact that the people didn't know that they were Jewish, that is silly. What I am saying is, there were some people who did not know that through intermarriage there was Jewish blood in them. That is what I am saying. There was Jewish blood in them and these people did not know they were Jewish. They were picked up also. It didn't matter how little amount of blood that was in you that was Jewish, you were picked up for it and you went to the gas chamber. A country as old as Holland had intermarriages. The majority would stick together, yes. Mrs. Westerborg is married to a Jew.

JJ: She is not Jewish, but her husband is. He didn't even look like she always talked; he never came back from the concentration camp. She said that you would never have believed that her husband was Jewish if it would not have been on his identification card. Nobody would have known because she said he had blue eyes and red hair.

H: Now, in this case of the friend that you have where the man was Jewish and the lady was Protestant or something else, they took him away, but didn't bother her? Did they have children?

JJ: They did not take the non-Jewish partner. They did not take her.

H: In cases where there were children, they took the children?

J: Yes.

H: Now this section in Amsterdam that was all Jewish, they went there voluntarily? I mean, they weren't forcefully taken there.

J: No. They were not all rich people; they were not all businessmen. They were just normal. But that was quite a big community of Jewish people, Yodam. I don't think there was anywhere else in Holland that was such a big

community as you had there. Of course, it was of that magnitude, because how many were left? Very few.

H: They say maybe 10,000 out of all the Jews in Holland.

J: Well, that I don't know; I don't know numbers.

H: Did you see the movie "Hiding Places"?

J: No.

H: I wish you had. Is there a reason that you didn't go to it?

J: I have very little interest in movies. If you come to accounts of how other people see it, I have always found that I see it somewhat different. I have been in Indonesia and we have burned a village, which I participated in. If you would believe the accounts that are in the papers, why that happened there, they never even said what happened to us before the village was burned. To give you an example, I have had other occasions where I have read things that differ so much from what I have seen. I have books about our time, where I was in Indonesia and what we did.

I have heard about "Hiding Places". I have heard people who say they cried. I don't know if everything was as dramatic as they pictured it. Maybe I seen it different or something, I don't know that. I have just seen people being taken away. I could maybe give you a good account of it. Right now I can't. I can only tell you what I saw, which are the simple facts.

H: Well, you know the theme or the gist of the story anyhow: The family, the Tenblum family.

J: They did hide Jewish people and they were Protestants, yes I heard about that. They got punished and they never found the people that they were hiding. But these things did happen. There is no argument there. We know that.

H: There actually were a number of Dutch families who hid Jewish people, risking their own lives?

J: Oh, I know people who did that, yes. In the town where I lived it has happened. There were plenty of people who knew where Jews were, who would not talk. I won't say that these people, if they would have been put under pressure, wouldn't have talked. I am not going to say that. All I am saying was they did not squeal on them.

H: They didn't try to make points with the Germans by turning them in?

- J: No way. We knew Jewish people who were being hid. Yes, we did, and so did a lot of other people. I am not the only one who knew that. Now if the wrong people knew it, they would probably . . . There must have been cases where the wrong people knew it, where they squealed on them, yes. I know it happened, but I don't know personally about people who have squealed on Jews. I know of people who knew and didn't squeal, you follow me?
- H: Yes. You mentioned before that the Germans would change a mayor and put somebody in that was more sympathetic with them. Were there Dutch reprisals against the collaborators?
- J: On some of them and on some of them not. Now the one I have particularly in mind was the one who was in Alblasserdam. He was given a job, was removed after the war and a couple of years later he was given another job as a mayor. The mayor in Holland is appointed by the queen, he is not elected. You have to realize that. Only the town council members are elected by the people, the mayor is not. These were cases by which we said that it was almost impossible that they could do that, you know. The response of the higher-up squad at that time--we cannot attribute that directly because of his actions people have been killed. That is the response we got in Holland. There have been more cases which I do believe we will have anywhere in the world where people have friends in certain places who can whitewash you. That happened everywhere, and this must have been a case where somebody must have been whitewashed.
- H: Right, to get the office back?
- J: To get the office back afterwards because I personally found that he was cooperating with the Germans. You would say on what specific points? Well, on general points. See, what we required of these people was to inform us of actions the Germans would take. The Germans would take action and some actions take some kind of preparation to do certain things. The mayor would know things like that. Not all of them, but certain things he would know, right?
- H: Right.
- J: We required that people in these places would advise us as to what was happening. And that man at certain points did not. Otherwise, we wouldn't have lost our means of transportation. We would have lost people to Germany, you know. Although you couldn't directly accuse him of killing people, I say indirectly it would have been possible

by the people who were taken to Germany and were killed.

H: Now when you say, we required, you are talking about the underground that required it?

J: Yes. Well, and the people themselves, we as people. But the underground also, of course. As people you expected that. We were Dutch people first, we were not Germans. We had our own language, and we were minding our own business.

H: This maybe is truly just American, but sometimes we think of Dutch people and German people like first cousins.

J: And my response to that is, maybe as I see it, that we are as close to the Germans as the Americans are to the Mexicans. I see it that way, because they border on the United States. Now that is the way I see it.

We have never proclaimed, although we might be called Arians, to be a super race. The German people felt they were a super race.

Whether anybody likes it or not, I can work here. We moved here three or four years ago from the Detroit area. I worked in Detroit for General Motors. I worked with quite a few Germans and they are not all that bad. They have good people too, you know. They are not all bad people. However, they have a tendency to be projecting themselves as better than the rest of the world. I have worked with a lot of Germans and the first thing they will say, and it comes out every other sentence, is "these damn Jews". You will almost never hear that from anybody from Holland. I do believe there is a big difference in them.

H: In your history that they taught you when you were a youth going through school, did they teach any relationship of in the ancient days . . .

J: No, we came more from Spain. We had more to do with Spain than we did with Germany. At a certain time in history, Holland was a lot bigger than it is now. It included a big part of Germany, and almost all of Belgium. I don't know how far it went up into Denmark or not.

H: Back to the fellows like your brother who was taken to Germany to work. Were many of them lost in Germany?

J: Percentagewise, I don't know. There were quite a few lost that would never come back, through illness, bombardments, and not cooperating and winding up at concentration camps. The percentage lost I don't know. I cannot tell you.

- H: If they just went over there and worked?
- J: They had no problems except for bombardments and illness. If they cooperated, they had no problem, absolutely none.
- H: Was there any reaction against those that might have cooperated in Germany?
- J: In Germany, no. In Holland, yes. Absolutely not because you had to be level-headed enough to say, "Well, they didn't go on their own free will. They didn't go on their own volition, you know, so they worked there." They are not my friends, by no means, none of them. But then it would go on when they came back anyway. If you would have heard me when I heard that my brother came back with a German girl. You would not believe what I thought about that.
- H: Looking at it thirty years later.
- J: There was nothing wrong with what he did.
- H: Why did you develop that attitude toward him, that would cause you to be responsible for his selection of a wife?
- J: Well, because she was a German, totally on that basis. Which was of course very short-sided, very narrow-minded. Hey, I am not going to say that I wasn't narrow-minded; I was very narrow-minded at that time.
- H: Of course, this was caused by your experience?
- J: Right. You have to realize how we would grow in years. From fifteen or sixteen years on until you were twenty years old, all you had in you was hate against one object--that was day and night hatred--the Germans. That was your enemy. You had an enemy, a big enemy.
- H: This grows over that whole period of time.
- J: And because you are young, you catch that very early, especially by the things they did very early in the war. First, the bombardment of the little town where my sister lived which was maybe three miles from where we lived. Then the straffing, what you saw with your own eyes, what they did to fleeing civilians. For example, my wife's grandfather fled from that same town and went to another town. He got bombarded there and was killed. That was all very innocent civilian people who get killed.
- The civilian authorities which were really also military authorities, you couldn't comprehend how they worked until you saw that they would shoot people on the spot--not on the spot; they took them to another town. But a couple

of hours later, they were killed.

H: Was there a reason that they took them to another town?

J: That was where the so-called higher command of the Germans was and they were going to decide. That was called an interrogation. The so-called trial would last maybe 15 minutes and they were shot. But they were taken to another town.

H: Even when they took out the whole village of men?

J: They were taken some place else.

That is why I said that you developed that hatred and you are narrow-minded; I was. Later on, you realize in a bigger context what was happening, who they were, and you said, "Well, they weren't all that bad."

H: Now after these years have passed, how do you feel about the Germans now? That is the Germany Germans? I mean you have to work in a country where . . .

J: I have no objections against Germans as long as they don't want to impose their will upon me. I have always had that. I hate anybody who is going to tell me what to do.

H: The reason I asked that question, in research, we find that there still is a very strong feeling amongst Germans with regard to Jews and with European Jews with regard to Germans. Even though these Jews--the ones that are in this book that I am reading--have escaped to Israel, there is a strong feeling there.

JJ: Against the Germans?

H: Yes.

J: Oh, if I was a Jew, personally, I can see that there are Jews who have made it their life ambition to hunt them down. I can feel very much for these people when they do that.

JJ: For what they did to them.

J: I have great admiration for these few people. There are a few of them who tracked all over the world, trying to track them down. And they have my blessing. Even thirty or forty years after the war, I can't help it. I don't believe that anybody has a right to take anybody else's life.

I have worked with plenty of Germans and they could have gotten on top of me. I have found that is something that

they have to do. They have to prove to themselves and the world that they are better than anybody else.

H: Do you have an idea where this enters into the make-up of their thinking? Is it a cultural thing?

J: Yes, because they really genuinely believe that they are better than anybody else. Now, for instance in a skilled trade, in my trade for instance, they are good. However, I say you are not better than anybody else who is good. Do you follow me?

H: Yes.

J: You have as many bad ones as there are good ones on the other side of the fence. At certain times, you have more drive because you want to prove to the world that you are better, not to anybody else, just to the world. Well, that is why they still go after them regardless of what anybody says.

H: I noticed that there is enough personal appraisal, that it is important. Would you feel that given the opportunity that they would unite to try to express this same thing that Bismark, and the kaiser, and Hitler . . .

J: No, Hitler, no. I have to say that I have to take the kaiser and Bismark on a different level than Hitler.

H: Why?

J: Because of his persecution of the Jewish people and the all out show of inhumanity of the system itself. Like they say, "Life is very cheap in the Far East." Well, life too, in that type of German. I am not going to say that all Germans are like that, but to that type of German anybody who was not German, life is very cheap. Otherwise, he could dispose of them very easily. There is nothing wrong with it. There is nothing wrong, in their eyes, to kill these Jews. I won't say that every German knew what was going on, but a big percentage knew what was going on.

H: That was the next thing that I wanted to come to.

J: A big percentage knew what was going on. Some say, for instance, "Yes, but not all of the German soldiers were that bad." No, maybe not, if you approached them friendly and stuck your hand out and said, "Hi, I am glad to see you." Well, we were not that way. At least the guys that I hung around with were not that way. So we were in constant trouble if we met these guys because well . . .

JJ: It was probably your own hostility.

J: Well, maybe, but you see we did not go out and try to kick them while they went out of their way to try to kick us. I mean they would physically go out of their way to try to get at you. Then you could say, "Well, the German soldiers themselves were not that bad, except the higher command." Why would they go out of their way to pick a fight with you and knock the daylight out of you? They did that. They didn't have to be German, just out of sheer pleasure. There were plenty of them that did that, because it happened to us.

They were brought up in the Hitler youth, and from that day on, they felt that they were super. The older Germans, no, they were not like that at all. That is why I said I would definitely like to make a distinction between the Germans of World War II to the Germans of World War I. Not that I have anything good to say about either one, but one was worse than the other one.

I am talking about general hate. I have worked with Germans who are wonderful people. I am not going to say that they are not because I can get along with them. I do believe that I know how to approach them because of the experience I had. Maybe they know where I come from. They are a little bit . . . He had so many bad feelings toward us, maybe that is the reason why I can get along with them now. They are always treating me a little bit different than they would treat someone else because they know where I come from. They know who I am, and I work with them.

H: There is a professor at Youngstown, who is in the chemistry department over there. His name is Koknat. Dr. Friedman knows him. He is a German and was born about six miles from the border of Holland and grew up somewhere there. I interviewed him too. He seems to have a different opinion of things than Germans that live further to the east.

J: I believe that.

JJ: Germany is big.

J: Even Holland, this is so small. People who lived on the German border would have a different opinion of the Germans than I have. I lived close to the North Sea, in a province of South Holland, close to Rotterdam, which is close to the sea. I have a different opinion, of course; I don't have a good opinion of them.

H: Well, it is just whatever your association is with them. That is what develops your opinion.

J: Right, which is not always right of course.

H: But what other basis do you have to form an opinion on?

J: Right. See I am not going to say that my opinion of the Germans is the right one, don't get me wrong. I will never say that. I have these experiences, and I find when I meet them now . . . I am talking about the first line Germans who came from Germany now. In other words, ten, twenty, twenty-five years ago, after the war. People of my age have the attitude I have found . . .

H: Deutschlanduberalles.

J: Right, that is what I am saying. I never professed to know everything about the Germans. I do not. Of course, I have met a few, but I haven't met a whole country, so I can't say that. Like my wife said, for instance, they would just come with a whole troop marching down the dike, stop, go in all of the houses--the officers--and see if there was room for them to sleep. How silly can you get right? But they did that.

JJ: Not only that, but you had to feed them too.

H: Did they provide rations?

J: No, they did not.

H: Where did the food come from?

J: Out of your closet.

I can remember that they came with no kitchen at all, no supplies, went in the houses and just ate whatever there was in the house. At certain times they did whatever the occasion presented. That is why there are differences.

There are many more things that did happen that I forget. Like I said, thirty years was a long time.

H: This concludes the interview with Mr. Jongeling. It was not intended to be initially as philosophic as it turned out, but I think that it could be very helpful in that it demonstrated the development of an attitude that exists in many people. And the reasons that this attitude has developed are evident in the events that Mr. Jongeling related.