



UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT – RENEE BORNSTEIN

[Testimony: 1hr 29 mins. Artefacts: 7' 31"]

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10:00:00:00

Renee Bornstein

My name is Renee Bornstein. I'm born the 10th of February 1934 in Strasbourg, France. I survived the war as a hidden child and as a smuggled child.

[fade to black and back up]

10:00:15:04

Interviewer

Well, first of all, um, thank you very much for agreeing to talk me. You've never been interviewed before?

10:00:21:14

Renee

No. No, not as far as I, remember. No, I was never interviewed, I can say no. I was never interviewed.

10:00:28:08

Interviewer

So how do you feel now? Are you, do you feel worried about it? Or do you feel relieved to be able to talk about it? How do you feel to talk?

10:00:36:24

Renee

Yes, I am, I am, Just I would like to say continuation will know the future generation is to know that the film is very important. So that's why also I am here. That they know it.

10:00:49:00

Interviewer

How much of your story have you always shared with the people around you and your family?

10:00:54:05

Renee

Well 70 years it was absolutely, I buried it. I never spoke about it. Something, completely, I blocked it you see. Yeah.

10:01:04:14

Interviewer

Is that to everybody? There's, there's been nobody that you've shared your experiences with?

10:01:08:07

Renee

Not, not as far as I know, 70 years, er, 70 years fear maybe. Sometimes with my sister who's, who had the same, was with me. But very rarely we spoke about it. No, I didn't speak you know. I lived with a man who was a survivor from a, cause he was



four and half years in concentration camp. And I never told him my story because I saw that he'd suffered so much more than I. And he didn't speak about his, we had a, he had a busy life. We had a very busy life and we never spoke about, er, Holocaust. He was very involved, he was a President from people who were in camps, the Jews the non-Jews. He was in relate, relation with, er, governments, the Germans the Bavarian government. And he intervened for people. But, er, in our daily life we never, I can tell you, we never spoke about it. He had three children, we had, we have three children, although he is not here anymore. But, er, he was a dentist, he worked, workaholic. Very early, went in the practice came late, night, home. And then he came, also he had his, er, meetings. But we never, we never spoke about the past. [pause] I know, but he said, I must tell you that a few times a year he told me, "to this night I was in the camp." So, I then said, "why didn't you wake me? You should wake, wake me up." He said, "oh, you slept so well." And never, er, spoke. And to be honest now that I'm an old woman I realise that I'm just grateful. When I was young I took it for granted, life was too busy.

[cut for sound]

10:02:47:12

Interviewer

Um, when you say, um, looking back from, from this point in your life, you, you, you now feel grateful that you've survived? Is that what you mean?

10:02:57:13

Renee

Yes, grateful.

10:02:58:01

Interviewer

Before you took it for granted. That you were, you were going to survive because you were young?

10:03:02:14

Renee

No, I had, well, yes. I am, I'm grateful that I survived. I don't took it, I don't know if I take it for granted, maybe.

10:03:09:16

Interviewer

Sorry, no I'm not saying that. Just that when you were younger you said, you just got on with it, whereas now,

10:03:14:16

Renee [interrupts Interviewer]

Yeah. I didn't speak about it, no. Until many, many years. I went once in a reunion des enfants c aches in Bruxelles, I went the first time, we were supposed to meet all the different people from the foreign country. I already lived here. And that's why we're hoping to meet the French part and I don't know whatever they had a



difference of opin, of opinion, they didn't come. So I didn't meet them. And then I learned also, they said it was, er, er, a speech about people who never talk about it. How people would speak about it. And I was one who never talk about it. I wasn't discussing with. And I sat through, we had little groups, and we were, you could speak to a psychiatrist. It was the first time in my life. And, er, I said, er, I never spoke, I never spoke about my story and I never, er, mentioned my husband because I saw he suffered so much more. I read his book and he said, "you should never compare for, for suffering." But he was already not there when I., that was a first. I don't know when I realised that other people were like me, blocked it. Sometimes they didn't want to, not to the children. I don't, I don't remember, well if I should tell, ask them if I spoke about it. I'm not conscious that I mentioned this story.

10:04:32:11

I just remember when I was ten years - I was taken when I was ten, ten years old - and when I had children of this age, and grandchildren, I always realise, oh, how, thank God we live in peace, you know. That shouldn't happen what they, what had happened to me. To my generation I would say.

10:04:52:12

Interviewer

What has made you speak about it? And certainly what has made you come today to talk to me?

10:05:00:00

Renee

I already talk about it. Now, I must say that is 70 years, well '72 I spoke the first time. I've, er, I spoke in a school in JFS in, er, London. My son ask me to speak, said so important for the children. Other people were speaking too. And I spoke, er, six months ago, in, er, in a synagogue. You know, after the, the synagogue. And I ask also the Rabbi's wife to help me, to ask me questions, it's easier for me. And that's only a time which I, when I spoke publicly or to people, I never speak to my friends, I never mentioned this story. Never, never that I can assure you. That I know I am conscious.

10:05:42:16

Interviewer

Is it easier to talk about it now?

10:05:45:12

Renee

Now, yes it is easier.

10:05:48:00

Interviewer

Why'd you think that is?

10:05:48:08

Renee [*interrupting Interviewer*]



But I'm still, er, I can't say it's easier, no. It's, now I would say look I am very in, er, I still myself, I said I'm not nervous. I try, you know, with auto suggestion, I won't be nervous. But I am. Somehow I, I feel it in my, in my head, yeah.

10:06:05:06

Interviewer

Oh, I don't want you to be nervous.

10:06:06:18

Renee

No, no. You know it's; I want to speak. You know you didn't force me, nobody. But I realise myself that, and my entire life probably it upset me also in my subconscious that I didn't want to talk about it. And everybody's different. My sister went to school and spoke about it, and I couldn't.

10:06:27:02

Interviewer

Maybe after this interview you will feel better, because you, well you would have recorded your testimony for the generations that will come. And you, you understand the principle of the project and that's why you've agreed.

10:06:39:02

Renee [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Yes I should, you know, it's my generation, how long you know this generation will be here. My sister, I have three children and one daughter in Israel. She asked me, "oh, please Mum, er, talk or speak." And I said, "oh, I just spoke, er, in London. I can't do it, er, so in a short time." It's funny it shouldn't upset me anymore after so many, many years.

10:07:00:21

Interviewer

After you, um, the, the, the, the talk in London and after speaking in the synagogue. Did you feel worse after it? Or better?

10:07:11:16

Renee

I feel I; I think I feel better. I didn't feel worse, no. I feel better, I feel relieved, you know that I was able. I was happy in myself to be able to be, to speak about it. Because I couldn't for so many, many years.

10:07:25:09

Interviewer

Did your children never ask you about your experiences about growing up or what had happened to you?

10:07:32:15

Renee

No, not as far as I'm conscious, no. No evidence of it. I don't know, I don't, I don't



know. I don't think so.

10:07:39:10

Interviewer

But also maybe if they did ask you, you would want to protect them. Because that's your job as a mother, to protect your children?

10:07:45:00

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] Um, I might tell them if they would ask me. I'm sure I would tell them. I learned in this, er, when, that you should tell your children. Tell your children you know it's important. But I still went back and didn't speak about it.

10:08:00:14

Interviewer

Do you regret that now?

10:08:02:23

Renee

No. I would say no. No, no I don't regret. Maybe I don't know. I didn't feel at the time I was not ready to speak. Probably I was not ready mentally to speak about it.

10:08:16:17

Interviewer

So how did you cope? How did you process your feelings over the years? You just buried it?

10:08:22:10

Renee

I buried it. I never spoke, I never, I didn't, I really, um, I see, I very rarely that I thought about it. Just when I had children about this age. That was a moment where I went back in my child, in my own childhood. Otherwise, no it was,

10:08:39:24

Interviewer

And it's interesting that your husband, as a camp survivor as well, also didn't speak. He didn't seek comfort to share with you?

10:08:49:18

Renee

No because he said he wrote a book, and I read his manuscript. You know, er, I read before it was printed. So, he didn't need to speak about him. I ask him probably on the beginning, one or two questions, which, er, because which interest me. Er, he was in a camp where, er, the master let him hear Radio Londres. So that was in the beginning I think in '41. Then I ask him question yes about this man. And he told me he was looking for him, or after the war, he was looking for him to save his life. But my husband said he was probably killed by the Russian, you know they didn't, the Russian didn't ask who and what. He was, er, he said if I am in the camp, I'm like



you, I was forced to come here. But he was, er, gave him sandwiches, seven months he was in this camp, where this man helped him.

10:09:42:05

Interviewer

Why do you think it's important,

10:09:44:05

Renee

And that's the only part when we spoke about it. That's the only thing.

10:09:48:03

Interviewer

Thank you. Why do you think it's important to your, record your testimony today?

10:09:53:21

Renee

Yes, which I said before. That the future generation should know and should never, never happen again. That is important.

10:10:02:06

Interviewer

And do you feel a sense of responsibility to help with that recording of history?

10:10:06:19

Renee

Yes, that I feel. I think really that's why I'm here really.

10:10:12:03

Interviewer

Were you very anxious before you came to this meeting?

10:10:16:05

Renee

A little bit. I was not very but a little bit. Er, apprehensive a little bit. Yes I have to say that I was.

10:10:23:23

Interviewer

You'll hopefully feel much better when it's finished. Um.

10:10:28:08

Renee

I will, I will be alright.

10:10:29:20

Interviewer

Of course. [pause] When you look back at that period of history. Are you able to



forgive the people who changed the course of your life? Can you forgive the Nazis?

10:10:43:17

Renee

That I don't know. It's a very difficult question that. But, to forgive them, no I wouldn't. I will, er, I don't know if I can forgive, ever forgive these people, what they did. I was a long time, er, I had hate in me. Which my husband didn't have, I have hate, I had hate once, yeah. I have to say the truth. But if I go - forgive them - er, you can't forgive people, er, murderers like that. That's my opinion. I admire people who forgive them. I saw that on the television, the lady who even embraced, er, embraced him. But I couldn't no. I said, "how could she?"

10:11:27:20

Interviewer

And how would you say the experiences that you had when you were growing up have affected you throughout your life? Has it changed you as a person? Has it made you more determined or more nervous? Or how has it affected your psyche?

10:11:46:21

Renee

Probably I best answer you that I don't know if, how it affected me. Probably affected me, so I sound unsure . But, er, maybe I had a certain anxiety in me. And I always imagine it's from my experience as a child.

10:12:03:18

Interviewer

That it's made you unsure of what's around?

10:12:07:06

Renee

Not unsure but, er, no, I am not, er, certain not that, no.

10:12:13:06

Interviewer

Okay. It's difficult to know how you would have turned out one way or the other isn't it?

10:12:19:00

Renee

No, it's difficult because I think after all I always thought I was normal. I had a normal childhood, I had loving parents. They gave us a lot of love and, er, it helped, I think it helped a lot, a lot in growing up.

10:12:32:08

Interviewer

Absolutely. Um, and then the question that I, um, was telling you about earlier on. About [pause] what lessons we can learn from the past. And when you look around the landscape, whether you feel that we have learnt lessons from the period of



history?

10:12:50:24

Renee

Certainly I think, er, no. Because it's war everywhere. And it really it makes me very, very sad when I hear what happened. And then you switch on the television each, er, each few days it's a war somewhere else. And when I see how the children are, always a continuation are affected the most, you know. And, yes I'm very, er, very, very sad about it. That's, humanity didn't learn anything about the past.

10:13:18:18

Interviewer

It's an answer that most people say when I ask that question. Most people feel profoundly depressed that we haven't learnt any lessons from the past.

10:13:29:03

Renee

Yes, that is true.

10:13:30:09

Interviewer

And there is a great deal of anxiety for the future. But do you feel that the extremity of the Holocaust can reoccur? Do you feel that we can reach those extremes again?

10:13:40:16

Renee

No, I don't think so. I think that I, I'm sure it will never happen again. That my, personally that it never happen again.

10:13:49:19

Interviewer

And the opportunity,

10:13:51:04

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] Because that's why it's so important, the big Europe, you know. I'm very sad if England goes out of the Eur-, of, er, Europe. I think it's very important that a big Europe, er, it will be no war I think. It would help that no war will start it.

10:14:07:19

Interviewer

Well, very soon we will know what will happen. *[Laughs]*

10:14:11:03

Renee

I don't think,



10:14:11:03

Interviewer [*talking over Renee*]

I think we all feel a bit sick about it [*laughs*]

10:14:13:04

Renee

Well, even if they go out I don't think it will change to be honest. It would not change, no. And personally I hope it will not change anything.

10:14:21:24

Interviewer

Um, we were talking about future generations. And messages, er, and an opportunity now to leave a message for your great, great, great grandchildren; who will be able to hear your interview, will be able to listen to your story. And will want to learn something from it. That's something from you. Is there anything that you can pass on?

10:14:45:05

Renee

I hope that they will never, never encounter, er, such horrible experience. That they will be able to live in peace. That is my wish from all my heart. For all the population.

10:15:00:16

Interviewer

Thank you very much. So now we will go back to the beginning, and we will leave the general questions. And we can return to them later if you wish. But otherwise we'll just talk about you now. Um, and we will start from the beginning, you were born in 1934.

10:15:17:09

Renee

Yes.

10:15:17:22

Interviewer

I can't believe you're 82 years old, it's ridiculous.

10:15:19:01

Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] I am. I feel it really. [*Laughs*]

10:15:21:23

Interviewer

You certainly don't look it, let me tell you. Can you tell me a little bit about your family. If we, if we think about that the pre-war life, when you were nought to five. Your family, your mother, your father. Where did you live? What was your home like? Can you describe to me that?



10:15:37:08

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] Yes we had, er, we had a lovely home I remember. We had a lovely home near Strasbourg and, er, I think it was a normal life, you know. I don't know, I don't know I was five years old, er, I have not such much, er, big remembrance. But we were a happy family. I was a happy child. I had a happy childhood.

10:15:57:16

I grew up with my sister who is three years older and a brother who is one year younger.

10:16:03:10

And then, in 1939, we were taken, all the two province - Alsace-Lorraine - they had, er, they were expelled. They had to go, Hitler wanted to take that, er, er, the province for himself. Yes he came, yes he takes it for himself.

10:16:21:09

And we were sent to France, we were refugee in the same country. So we were sent in we call it - in the middle of France, Limoges - we call it quarter to twelve. And that was one of the past, of the most primitive part in France. For example, in Strasbourg everybody had a bath that was, it didn't exist there, that people had a bath in, in near Limoges. It was very primitive. Some, er, flats had some houses had no water, you had to take the water from outside. So my mother I remember was very, very unhappy.

10:16:56:18

And my father was taken *prisonnier de guerre*. He was sent, er, to the *militaire*, French *militaire*. But he came back after one year because I am née Koenig. So it's not a Jewish name, so my father was not, er, taken as a Jew, so he was liberated and came back to the family. But my mother didn't know for many, many months where my father was. And my father didn't know where we were.

10:17:23:22

Interviewer

How much of this period of your life do you remember?

10:17:23:22

Renee

I remember very well. But my mother -I remember - my mother didn't know where my father was. And we were, er, from Strasbourg we were sent, er, in another little town, which I mentioned - In St Dié, and, er, we lived a few days and, er, er, we the people gave us, you know like she gave us a room in a flat. And my mother, I remember my mother crying in the evening when she thought we were all, er, er, sleeping in one room. And I remember my mother she was terribly upset. We didn't know where my father was. Lost our lovely home, you know. Can you imagine, your lovely home and suddenly a refugee and now that I'm old I can imagine much more. At the time,



10:18:13:23

and then we had to take a train, er, well my sister said eight days but I know it wasn't more than two days. It took to go to Saint Julien, a little town near Limoges.

10:18:26:10

Interviewer

Before we talk about that, your father was in the textile business wasn't he?

10:18:29:24

Renee

Yes.

10:18:30:24

Interviewer

So you had quite a comfortable home.

10:18:32:15

Renee

A comfortable home, yeah.

10:18:33:19

Interviewer

So it must have been very hard for your mother to suddenly lose her husband or not know where he is. And then to be responsible for you?

10:18:41:19

Renee

As she was my mother had a terrible time because her parents they lived on the other, er, Strasburg is a border town. And 2 kms further it is a German border, it is Kehl. And my grandparents lived in Kehl. My mother was born Strasbourg, it was German. Then, 18 became French, German born, Strasburg with France . But my grandparents went back to Kehl. And my mother had a, somebody it must have phoned her, we had a phone at the time. That she had to come immediately.

10:19:14:15

So my grandparents were taken, deported in 1938. So, and her brothers were all, either all over Europe. Three brothers were hiding in different country, nobody wanted a Jew, you know, it was a terrible, terrible, er, time. And that I remember we leave that with it, I went with my mother to see Kehl and she arrived in the flat of my grandparents, who was preparing Shabbat and was taken like that on a Friday.

Though my mother went, it was a period I think. And then the war. When she didn't know where my father was. She went through a lot at the very, traumatic, er, experience.

10:19:56:01



Interviewer

Just to take a quick aside. When you look at the refugee crisis that we have at the moment and the refugees that are coming into Europe, you must have a very different insight into what that must feel like?

10:20:07:05

Renee

Yes, I have thought, er, I must tell you that I had a lot of feeling for these people. Because I remembered when we were taken refugee how hard it was. It was very, very hard, yeah.

10:20:18:15

Interviewer

So you have a great deal of sympathy with the people who are coming here?

10:20:20:24

Renee [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Yes, I must say I have a sympathy. I feel sorry that they had to left their homes, their livelihood [*sic*]. I must say it's a very distressful situation. It's, it's just terrible. And it's worse because they are killed. We were not killed, you know. It was, it was peacefully, we had, we were asked to leave. But the Jews didn't come back. We were not allowed to come back. In 1940. And the others went back and it was better, nobody would survive because it was, er, German.

10:20:51:22

Interviewer

Before we talk about your experiences, what happened to your mother's parents?

10:20:57:14

Renee

They were deported. Because my grandparents they were, they had no nationalities they came, my grandfather had an Austrian nationality, was born in Galicia. And the, he was also soldier, 1914-18 as an Austrian, er, nationality. But 1938, they were the, er, they were without nationality. Because Austria had to give back, er, this part to Poland, to the Polish. And my grandparents were sent in a town in Poland. Never came back. They were not even 60, my grandparents, they were young at the time.

10:21:38:20

Interviewer

When you say they didn't come back, did they settle there?

10:21:40:22

Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] They were deport, deported.

10:21:43:01

Interviewer

And what, and what happened to them?



10:21:45:01

Renee

They were killed. They were killed on a terrible way.

10:21:48:13

Interviewer

Do you know what happened to them?

10:21:50:06

Renee

Yeah, we, we are, we, we yes, that they were killed. I don't know in which town they were, that I don't know. But I know they were, er, killed on a horrible way.

10:21:01:21

Interviewer

And was that always with your mother? Did she know that that had happened to them at this stage in your life? Or only discovered it later?

10:22:08:14

Renee

Only when the war was finished. '44. I remember it was like, you know, it was well, it was when, it was, it was not one person who lost one person. It was a general *comme on-dit* [French Dialogue] we say in French. When I'm nervous I don't find my, um, it was a *general, généralité*, Everybody lost, and everybody cried. But I remember my mother was, and my father he lost his parents also. A brother and sister. Er, they lost the whole family. It was a terrible time. I remember my parents being very, very sad. And they try not to show it in front of us but sometimes, you know, it, er, we, noticed that. And I think we were also very good children because, you know, it was a suffering from the parents, er, the children feel with them.

10:22:58:08

Interviewer

Yes, and also give a great counterbalance in many ways. So it, I'm sure you were a great comfort to your family.

10:23:05:01

Renee

Yeah, we were all good with, we had, we, you know we lived with it to be hidden, to be afraid about our life. Constantly to, to be confronted with this terrible thing.

10:23:17:23

Renee

We were hid in convent. And also people- farmers - er, gave us hospitality. Until when, er, until you know the, the Gestapo, the Wehrmacht what they called SS, they were saying, so, so Jews will have the same fate, they will be killed. And one day the



lady said to my mother, "I'm so sorry, but I'm so afraid I can't help you anymore." But the convent, you know, it was Notre Dame de [French Dialogue] they were very nice. We came at the night sometimes and they gave us hospitality.

10:23:49:15

Interviewer

We will go through all of that in a minute.

10:23:51:01

Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] I mean that was already '42, you know.

10:23:54:01

Interviewer

Yeah.

10:23:54:12

Renee

'42 we were for, first *zone libre.*, and then when the whole of France was occupied. End of, er, '42.

10:24:03:04

Interviewer

Okay. So let's, let's go back. We're, we're still back in kind of 1939. Your father had been taken off as a in the military. And your mother had been asked to leave with the children. Um, and she was very anxious cause she didn't know where her parents where either. So where did she take you?

10:24:24:20

Renee

She takes us where she was sent you know. We had, you had no choice, the refugee. We were sent in a little town *dans les Vosges* not far away from Strasbourg, And we were, er, you know, er, like I remember that, that we were first, we spend the night, you know, like in a...how do you called? Er, in a place where a lot of people were. And the next day, they organise it for the families. And the French people who were, er, willing to take refugees. So my mother find a very nice family, they were very nice to us. And we stayed I think two or three days.

10:25:05:24

Interviewer

Because you were so young, were you aware that what was happening was because you were Jewish?

10:25:12:19

Renee

But that was, that at the time the refugees in '39 had nothing to do with Jewish. That was a whole population. So that was our, I was not aware I was Jewish, no.



10:25:22:08

Interviewer

But your family were,

10:25:04:00

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] But that's what happened to my grandparents.

10:25:25:12

Interviewer

Yes.

10:25:26:05

Renee

I don't know if I, I was aware of that. That I must say, I will be honest. I could say yes but I'm going to say, as I say the truth, I don't know, yeah.

10:25:34:05

Interviewer

You were so young. Do you remember, um, packing? Do you remember knowing that you had to leave? And what you were taking with you.?

10:25:44:07

Renee

Yes. My mother put us, gave us a little rucksack. Was, was in the, what we could take on our shoulder. And she takes the luggage. It was not much luggage to take you know. It was impossible to carry everything. Each of us had a little rucksack. I don't remember what was in or not in. I don't remember that.

10:26:05:05

Interviewer

But you remember,

10:26:05:23

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] But I remember the rucksack, yeah. That I remember.

10:26:08:20

Interviewer

And you remember the journey?

10:26:10:11

Renee

Yes.

10:26:12:05



Interviewer

Do you remember being nervous about it or excited, some children talk about they felt that it was an adventure that they were going on? Do you remember anything about how you felt?

10:26:23:11

Renee

Oh, we felt not well because it was a very uncomfortable, uncomfortable train you know. Very primitive. I ask my sister if she remembers. She said she doesn't remember. And I remember it was no toilet and that left me, it was terrible for me, as a little girl, yeah.

10:26:40:03

Interviewer

So, as you said your mother managed to find a flat with some refuge for you.

10:26:45:12

Renee

Then when, er, she found a flat.

10:26:47:20

Interviewer

Yes.

10:26:48:03

Renee

And then from St Dié that was temporary, we were told it's only temporary. We were sent to Saint Julien. She found a flat, but when my father came a year later, after the *militaire*. He, er, my father he had, he came by bicycle he had to do a thousand miles with a bicycle. And he came to join my family. And he found straight away a more comfortable flat, where there was, a water was in the flat. Can you imagine, to have no toilets? You had to, we had to travel. And I remember I was no, two gardens to, to have toilets. That was, um, that was, and my, for my mother it was unimaginable, it was terrible for her.

10:27:31:21

Interviewer

It was such a contrast from what you had been used to.

10:27:34:17

Renee

But you know we children, I don't think we suffered about that at all. No.

10:27:43:10

Interviewer

Do you remember your father rejoining you and what that felt like when he was there?

10:27:43:09



Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] Yeah, it was, er, very, we were very, very happy. But my poor father join us and we all, we all had whooping cough. So my mother said the poor man after a thousand kilometres he couldn't sleep. He had no night for one week. That I remember, yeah. But I remember that my father came and he was, he was a loving father, yah. Very for the family, my father was a family man.

10:28:06:21

Interviewer

It must have been amazing to be reunited with him, having not known where he is. And for him as well to find his wife. It was through the Red Cross that he found you again.

10:28:15:08

Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] The Red Cross, yeah. They helped a lot.

10:28:19:08

Interviewer

So, um, at this point Saint Julien is in Free France, is that right?

10:28:23:18

Renee

Yes that was, [*talking over each other*]

10:28:24:18

Interviewer

What exactly did that mean?

10:28:26:16

Renee

Saint Julien that we had no *commandature*, the Germans were not there. They were in Limoges but not Saint Julien. But 19, er end of 1942 the whole of France was, er, it was finished. Was no *Zone Libre* anymore. It was *Zone Occupé* they call it. Occupied Zone. It was Vichy it was, er, it was also, er, the government was very pro-German. Er, Laval and Pétain. And the, and, er, they were big collaborator. Even the German didn't want the Jewish children. But, er, Laval didn't know what to do with them and sent them in the death camp.

10:29:10:21

Interviewer

How aware were you of what was going on in wider Europe? Did your parents explain to you what was happening?

10:29:18:01

Renee

No.



10:29:18:16

Interviewer

Were you aware that you were a Jewish family?

10:29:21:15

Renee

Yes. That I was very much, yes.

10:29:23:15

Interviewer

And were you proud to be Jewish?

10:29:25:21

Renee

Yes. I don't know if I were proud but, er, we were happy to be Jewish I think.

10:29:31:23

Interviewer

And how much of your religion were you able to,

10:29:35:21

Renee

Yes my father, we had Friday nights. My father, my mother is, my parents were religious. Friday nights, Shabbat. And my father went to, they didn't know what is Jewish in, where we were. They had no idea what is Jewish meaning. And we...they gave us, er, like a barrack, you know, like, er, a place. Er, where the Protestants they didn't know also what is Protestant. So we shared, the Sunday it was a Protestant, and the Saturday Shabbat was a Jew. So, we share it. And, er, they leave, er, we didn't believe in a rabbi, it was, er, one, under the rabbi there. [*Coughs*] We had no, the meat we had only once a week, er, chicken. They were slaughtered after the *ritualites* so, but that was, you know, that doesn't bother us as children, no.

10:30:29:08

Interviewer

Then in 1942 you are eight years old. Um, and Saint Julien is occupied by the Germans isn't it?

10:30:35:22

Renee

Yeah. It's Saint Julien.

10:30:37:10

Interviewer

Saint Julien. Sorry.

10:30:38:05

Renee

Because it exists, Saint Julien



10:30:40:20

Interviewer

I see So do you remember, um, that occupation and how it manifested itself?

10:30:46:06

Renee

No it was no, it was still the German, it was too small, it was 10,000 people. They didn't, they came time to time to do, er, round, round up you say [*French word*]. Because the underground were, er, very active and most of the under, underground were Jewish people. But also French people. So they came regularly and took Jewish people. The communists and the Jewish people. It was a very nice communist, you know, for example, er, the non-Jewish, the Catholic, er, young Cath, the Catholic couples they were communists. But they had their, er, they, they had their, um, wedding or their benediction in the church, you know. It was communism like in Italy. You know, not like in Russia. They still were religious but they were communists.

10:31:34:14

Interviewer

So you were aware even at your age of eight.

10:31:38:12

Renee

Oh yeah, I was very much aware that,

10:31:40:07

Interviewer

and of the resistance. And all the Underground activity that was going on.

10:31:43:21

Renee

[*interrupting Interviewer*] The underground activity, no. But I was aware, er, aware that it was war and it was dangerous. Because, er, when it was a fast day Yom Kippur, I, eight, er, eight years, yes my mother was expecting the number four. The, in the most terrible time. And I was with my mother and she told me, "oh, I just, I just heard it's [*French word*]." Um, she said to me, "Renee go quickly in the synagogue. And tell them it's a [*same French word repeated*]." Should be careful but they still continue the office. No I was aware at eight years old, you know. We were absolutely, er, conscious that was war, yeah.

10:32:26:01

Interviewer

Um, in 1944 the round up started to escalate didn't it?

10:32:31:00

Renee

Yes.



10:32:31:08

Interviewer

Can you give me some idea of what that felt like as a child to be?

10:32:34:10

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] Well, when you have children, we had very good friends. And the, one day the whole family was taken. And I remember, er, we were all crying because we knew we will never, .we don't see, we will not see, we never saw them again. Anyway they didn't come back. Yes, they were taken, the Jews were taken. It was also a few incidents, but we were fully aware that it was, er, that we live in a war. Of that we were aware, yeah.

10:33:03:02

Interviewer

What, what was a round up to you? What happened?

10:33:06:19

Renee

As, as a a child I was not afraid to be taken - you know - that I didn't realise at the, I could be taken. Until '44, or '44, and then, er, when the, the Jewish organisation, one after the other, they came to see the Jewish people who had children. And asked them, they said, "it's a duty from the parents to send the children into security. " Because the Jewish children were taken and, I think 120,000 didn't come back, Jewish children in France. They were taken in school, on the street. And, um, so my mother always have very big heart I remember she, my parents let us go to take part with this convoy in Switzerland. And we were the last trans, the last transport of children, er, to go to cross, er, Switzerland. It was already, it was, er, cer, it was beginning of June. It was already, er, er, a part of France was already liberated. Le Bretagne, Normandie was liberated. And we were sent to Switzerland and the man in charge - the Jewish man - how was he called? *Racine?*, I think, Jean *Racine*.? He, he couldn't give the message to this poor Marianne Cohn. She shouldn't take us it's dangerous. She couldn't get the message anymore. And she took us.

10:34:33:12

Interviewer

So can you clarify? You, did you say goodbye to your parents?

10:34:36:13

Renee

We said goodbye and,

10:34:37:09

Interviewer

Can you just describe what happened?

10:34:39:20



Renee

I don't remember. That I don't remember. I mean, I ask a few times my sister if we cried. I don't remember you know. Probably when we left we were very sad. But afterwards, I don't remember, it's like, I don't remember that I was crying. We were sent from Saint Julien, was a little town, 35 kilometres from Limoges. We were sent in Limoges in a convent. In the Avenue de Midi - I remember the name of the street where we were. And we were there, er, I don't know what it - one week. My sister, my brother and I and two other children from Saint Julien. We were five together. And we were in this, er, convent. And the nuns were very good but, er, they ask us individually. We said, er, er, one girl who was baptized at 15 years old, she lost her memory they said. The nun explained us that this girl her parents were killed in front of us, of her. So, they baptized that if she, if she, if she dies she will go to Paradise. And she told us, individually, she said, "look. You're going as a Jewish children, child. You're going to die. And it would be better if you are baptized. You will go to Paradise. And if not, as Jew you will go to Hell." So I remember that and you know, er, said very often, Judaism is something very deep. With, I said, as a ten-year-old, "no I don't want, er, I will stay Jewish." So we stayed,

10:36:14:10

Interviewer [*interrupting Renee*]

You have a very strong sense then of your,

10:36:16:05

Renee

Yes well it, I thought because we were not, er, brought up in Jewish schools we were brought up by the nuns, you know. But we knew we were Jewish. Er, because my parents were religious, we, we, we had that. But it's in you, you know. I must say, um, I was not the only one. I knew other one who did exactly the same.

10:36:37:15

Interviewer

It was a, a very, must have been - although you say you can't remember it - It must have been a very painful exercise to say goodbye to your parents.

10:36:45:22

Renee

Yes.

10:36:46:07

Interviewer

But,

10:36:46:20

Renee

Yeah, we were very, it was the first time that we left our parents. I remember that it was terrible. But we was, my sister, you know, I, we, we stick and my brother to each other very, no, it was painful. But if we, in the convent we cried that I don't



remember.

10:37:06:05

Interviewer

So my, my question was do you think that it was a little bit easier because you were with your sister and you were with your brother. And you were a unit of five children together?

10:37:16:08

Renee

Yeah. With that, was made it,

10:37:17:07

Interviewer

And the nuns were kind to you.

10:37:19:01

Renee

Yeah, oh the nuns they were very, very nice. I have no, at least, unless we had to go at 6 o'clock in the morning in the chapel, to make the prayer. And I felt, I was the only one I felt really it was not, very unwell, I couldn't, er, smell *l'incense*. You say - I don't know - in English incense. You know it was a strong smell. And I really, I nearly fainted, I said I have to go out or I'll faint. So they let me go. That I didn't see. But we were not, we didn't go for a short time to school. We had to go in the field and, um, *comme on dit?* you know it was a time of the asparagus and what was around, what, what...asparagus was had to be taken. And sometimes we were naughty we took the asparagus out, but we had to take the, the weeds yeah. We had to take something.

10:38:09:19

Interviewer

So how long were you in the convent?

10:38:11:20

Renee

Not long. I think one week.

10:38:14:01

Interviewer

And from the convent they then realised that you had to move on and you were moved to Switzerland.

10:38:18:22

Renee

[interrupting Interviewer] Yes because each time we had another person in charge of us. A young girl were always young girls. Then we moved to Lyon. We took the train. We, then even we went to take the train, we had to do a little walk and we saw the



Germans, er, we, I must say my childhood was for, er, with a lot of, er, *comme on dit* ? er Um, we were very afraid of, constantly afraid because we saw these men in their uniform. They, the Gestapo had big, er, boots. I remember their uniform. And the SS had black uniform with, er, this, er, death head on their, er, on their cap. And when we saw them on the street we quickly went in a corridor to hide. We were very conscious what happens. That,

10:39:08:04

then we took the train to Lyon. And I don't know how many hours is Lyon from Limoges and - quite far. And we arrived in Lyon in another convent. And this night was a *big bombardement* from the biggest station in Lyon called, I don't know, La Gare Perrache it was called at the time. And we spent the night in the cellar. And then, er, this Marianne, er, Marianne Cohn she was in charge. She took us and she said, "we're going in a nice town." Annecy, who has a beautiful lake and it was a beautiful day in June, a sunny day. So we had a, she was very kind, a kind person. And we, we felt good with her. And she gave us a nice, a few nice hours. But she said, er, "children, er, we missed, we missed the train. We're going to take a lorry." And the lorry was, we took a lorry. But I think, many years after, I think it was no train, you know because the Underground already cut all the [*les ligne de demarcations?*] it's called in French. They cut it. So I think, but she said we missed the train, we take a lorry. And this poor man who was a French man, he didn't know that we are Jewish. And he took us. And the lorry was very hot but they covered it, it is, er, in French you say [*French word*]. The cover, we were covered. We're not, we have not to be seen. We were 32, sometimes they said 36, I think 32 children. From three to 19. And we stopped at a border, you know, er, border, clandestine border. Who was, er, in a forest. And I think, what I read also, er, later, that the dogs, the German had dogs. And they, and they knew through their dogs that there were people, er, stopping there. And immediately, I see Citroen I remember very, very well. At the time the nicest car were called Citroen. And four of Hitler's German officers came out and behind this Citroen was a big lorry with German soldiers. As we children could escape and they were there and they ask us for, er, Marianne Cohn, "where are you going?" She said, "oh, er, I take the children from Lyons to escape the bombardment." There was a lot of bombing, to a *colonie de vacance* - to a holiday camp. And, er, so they, they start to question the papers. Our papers were not even finished. I remember how, they was not finished. But they noticed that we are not, er, we are not what she said. I think they noticed it. But still they followed the lorry to take us into this colony where Marianne, er, Con said, er, Pas de L'Echelles it was called. And, er, er, the, the headmistress or director from this children home she was a collaboratrice. When she saw us she said, "no it's not these children. I only expected boys." It was already, we, er, so they knew it would question. So they take straight away Marianne and the big children in the prison. Not far away. Er, in Annemasse. It was not far away from Annemasse. Er, and it was and they took them and us. The, this woman let us sleep. And at 2 o'clock they came and, er, started the interrogation. After each question, "what's your name? Are you Jewish?" Er, "how old are you?" "Are you Jewish?" "Where do your parents live?" And each name are you Jewish? We said, "no, no because Marianne said, no, no." But in the end they knew we are Jewish. And, er, one boy I just read it before came - I never read this page -



he said that even making him, er, putting his, er, trousers down. And he said they beat him so, and they asked him question but they noticed that he lies. Cause that was at the end of our [?] I have to tell you that after. But, er, the children, then en Prison du Pax. And, er, it was full this Prison du Pax, full of people. Even it was the last really, er, the last few days before the, the war ended in this part.

[cut for card change]

10:43:37:08

Interviewer

So, if we can talk a little more about Annemasse and the prison because I think this, is this, I'm right to think that this is the most traumatic period for you?

10:43:49:03

Renee Bornstein *[interrupting Interviewer]*

Yes. The prison, yeah. He organised the, er, the Lord Mayor that we had food from, er, what's called Secours National, some, er, that we got this soup each day. But I remember the, I can't, I don't remember but, I remember I didn't eat. We couldn't eat. You know, the, they gave us food, like would be even nicer I think in a dog. I remember we couldn't eat. And we couldn't wash also, that I don't think, it was one cold water in basin for the whole prison. I don't remember but, also, I don't remember how did if we wash or we did wash, I think we slept with our clothes. I'm not sure that we slept with our clothes.

10:44:35:08

Interviewer

So, just, if we go back a little bit, you were in the lorry?

10:44:39:16

Renee Bornstein

Yeah.

10:44:40:09

Interviewer

And from the lorry you were put into the prison?

10:44:41:19

Renee Bornstein

Yes. No, from the lorry we were in this Pas de L'Echelles er, for overnight, questioned and then we were sent in the prison.

10:44:49:07

Interviewer

You were ten years old and you were in prison?

10:44:51:11

Renee Bornstein

Yeah.



10:44:52:11

Interviewer

It's extraordinary.

10:44:53:18

Renee Bornstein

Yes, it is. You don't realise, we realise that it's prison because we were not allowed to go out. It was cells, the cell. In a cell. And er, I had a photo but, we didn't sleep in this bed, we had, er, something on the floor.

10:45:10:02

Interviewer

Were you interrogated?

10:45:11:17

Renee Bornstein

Yes, we were interrogated by the Gestapo *chef* who was called Mayer and I think he had, I, I think it, it was Mayer who had these blue eyes, you know, unusual blue eyes and he looked at you and he interrogate you with this, I don't know, which he has in hand was it a *fusil* or whatever he had, a *mitrailleuse* and another one next to him. And, er, he ask us, "What's your name? Are you Jewish? Where do you live? Where do you live? Where do you come from? W, where are your parents?". And um, afterward where Marianne Cohn also, I have to say, she said after t, two days, she was so badly, er, treated. She said to us, "I have cold baths, er, hot baths, beaten up.". She came, I remember as a child, swollen head like that. And she said, "Children see everything.". So, we said our name, Renee Koenig, and ,er, Koenig is a German name. So the Gestapo said, er, to my sister, he said to her, "Geh raus!". Get out! And she - we understand perfectly but, then the dialect from Alsace is very similar - and she didn't move. We didn't move. We said, "We don't understand." And he said, "You liar!". He said, the Gestapo interrogate us and you know, look intent. And on the bridge, er, the Gestapo was here and the boy on the other side was on, er, on a plank - you say plank? - and he was beaten up because they notice that he says lie. They said, "Where is your father?". He said, "My father was taken by the German.". "Where is your mother?". "She's in hospital.". They notice that he lies and they beat him up. And he s, they said to us, "If you don't say the truth you will beaten like him.". And, er, we went back to this, er, to this cell and, um, sometimes Marianne came. They comforted us and er, and er, we heard also, we saw other people, er, some, when they would tortured we could hear their last, er, scream. I will tell you that long I heard that, this screaming, you know like, it's, er, before they die in my ears.

10:47:33:13

Interviewer

The sound of people being tortured?

10:47:35:23

Renee Bornstein



Yes. Oh, that a long time followed me. But then, er, we were, the Lord Mayor, he begged them. The, er, the 15 eldest children had to stay in prison because they could work. And, we the youngest one, we were taken in a home what they, what the Annemasse organised for us you know – in a home. The call it Secours National basic home, we was there. And they came to count us and they said if one of you escape, you will be all killed and the Lord Mayor, Jean Deffaugt will be killed with you. But, er, then you know, they wanted to save Marianne Cohn which I knew later. I mean much, much later in my life. They want, they said, If she says she is has appendix they will put her to hospital and save her. Her chief, er, chief, er, he wanted to, that she escape. And she said, "No. I have the responsibility for the children. I will stay with them.". She, really, she gave her life for us. But then, er, the Gestapo, the Mayor was, too, you know. He played good with the German but, he was Resistance, he played the double, I think. And, er, Gestapo said that Chief Mayer was good. Er, "The children. We have no room for the children. We have no train to send them in the deport, to deport them. We have to kill them now.". So, he made a deal with them. He spoke with the chief, the chief Jean Deffaugt the chief of the Underground, a Jewish man, he was the organiser from the children who were sent to Switzerland and he said, er, "You're going to speak to Mayer. You will,", he said, "You know that the *guerre*, now and the war is nearly finished and you are going to die. We, we, make a deal with us. We help you to escape to Switzerland and you can join Germany but let us, let the children in life.". And it was really Jean Deffaugt who save us as the life. When he signed, my sister wrote in our name and he would write your *papa adoptif*. He was a nice man.

10:49:49:16

Interviewer

What happened to him?

10:49:52:14

Renee Bornstein

I don't know. You know, he, he had a normal life and he was decorated. He had the Legion d'Honneur, he had a gut of er...

10:49:57:23

Interviewer

So, he wasn't killed?

10:50:00:01

Renee Bornstein [*talking over each other*]

No, no. He wasn't killed because the Gestapo could, that's the terrible things that these two men could escape. And then it was finished, the war. Once he escape the prison was finished. But, the Lord Mayor was still afraid, so he send us, he organised for us that we go to Switzerland. He said, "You never know, they can come back.".

10:50:20:14

And we were three months in Geneve.



10:50:23:06

Interviewer

What about Marianne?

10:50:24:15

Renee Bornstein

She was killed 8th of July - on a terrible way. She was taken with five other prisoner in the night, she was taken, and she was killed in, before they killed her they beat her with a I read, I, I have it in my, here in the papers. And er, she was killed, yes, in a terrible way. She was only 23 years old. It was born 30. She was born, er, 22 I think, so 34.

10:50:53:24

Interviewer

What an amazing woman.

10:50:56:01

Renee Bornstein

Oh, amazing, more. But, you know, Mitterand gave her, when she was dead already, when he went to Israel he have her the biggest er, decoration what a human being can have, can get, the biggest. But, er...

10:51:11:04

Interviewer

And she deserved it.

10:51:12:07

Renee Bornstein

But she saved - before us - 200 children and she wrote this beautiful poem. She said she was taken a year before, she promised her father and mother, she will never, er, go join the, the Underground again, and she still did it. And she came, she was born in Germany and she came from a secular home, her parents were Jewish intellectual but, absolutely, er, not Jewish at all. And, er, they escaped to Spain and from Spain to France. France, they were taken in the camp de Gurs where my mother's family lived. So was taken from Germany to camp de Gurs. And they were taken and the two girls were taken - she has a sister, younger - was had, her sister was younger. They were taken by the Jewish Scout and there Marianne learned what is Judaism . Had no idea what is Judaism. She learned what Judaism and she joined the Underground. For despair of her poor father, yeah.

10:52:15:04

Interviewer

What do you remember of her?

10:52:17:06

Renee Bornstein

I remember her so well. I said, 50 years I didn't see her photo and I had her in memory. I could describe what she wears, the colour, exactly what she, how she



was, yeah. You never forget somebody like that. Never. And she was full, she always, she will always with me because I am *conscient* that I owe my life really to her. It was such a miracle, you know. Like, my late husband, "Each Jew will survive. It was not because cleverness it was just a miracle that we survived with, they wanted to kill us. You know, for all them, if you think what's missing. They killed her in a terrible way with five other nice people.

10:53:01:04

Interviewer

And if you had a chance to see her what would you have said?

10:53:05:21

Renee Bornstein

Oh, I couldn't thank her enough you know. How stoic she is, it doesn't exist anymore, such stoic people you know. She was just, er, I don't know, you cannot describe a person. Exceptionally stoic, except, exceptionally nice, gave her live for our children.

10:53:24:04

Interviewer

And to be so young, as well, and to understand what that would be like to save, I mean, she was barely a grown up herself at 22?

10:53:32:10

Renee Bornstein

No. yeah. She said she went out from the adolescence in herself, yeah.

10:53:35:21

Interviewer

And to be so selfless and so brave it, it's important that she was decorated like that. She deserves everything.

10:53:43:11

Renee Bornstein [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Oh yes. It was a, you know, they had a, they had people, er, the girl who did it before her, her brother was a chief of all this er, He was a chief, er, the organisation, chief organiser Jean Racine it was the name in France, everybody know. And his sister, Mila Racine she was, er, taken, she was sent to Ravensbrück and also didn't come back. And Marianne took the relief. She s, she saved 200 children. And I met, once, a woman, by chance, in Israel and, er, I don't know, she's, I don't know what she said about, spoke about Yad Vashem. "Oh!", she said, "I was, I am a child from Marianne Cohn.". And I said, "Me, too!", I said. But she was not arrested, it was, er, luck.

10:54:35:00

Interviewer

We have interviewed one of Marianne's accomplices.



10:54:39:13

Renee Bornstein

I would like to know this person.

10:54:40:18

Interviewer [*talking over each other*]

I am sure we can put you in touch with her if you would like because we have heard this story obviously before from her and what a special, extraordinarily brave woman she was. We will talk later.

10:54:52:03

Renee Bornstein

She was so young, really, when you think about 21 year, 22 - she was just.

10:54:59:13

Interviewer

So, at this point, you were separated from your parents. You were ten years old; your sister was 13 and your brother was nine. And you were separated from your parents for six months?

10:55:06:15

Renee Bornstein

Yes.

10:55:11:20

Interviewer

Do you remember missing them?

10:55:13:14

Renee Bornstein

Oh yes. We miss them. I remember when the holiday came, you know, Rosh Hashanah came. Oh, we missed them terribly. I remember when I, when I was ten years old I fasted, you know. I knew I was, er, I only have to fast when I was 12. First of all, my sister was ill, she had dysteria. And it's funny, we, she said it was so cold even in Switzerland, we had only one blanket. "Oh!", she said. "Renee, maybe, we slept in the room. Maybe, er, with three or four girls who slept in the same room. Maybe, we sleep together and we have two blankets.". I said, "Yes.". And the next morning she was taken she had dysteria and I didn't have it, you know, it was like a miracle that I didn't caught it. So, she was supposed to fast and I felt I am a growing up person and you know, it was like, nobody looked after you. You eat, you don't eat, you know. We were, er, fed, fed and they provide us with clothes. I remember, we had to give it back before we left. We, we but, er, I remember on the Sunday, er, Jewish people from, er, Geneve came to fetch us. My sister had a nice family and I, and I had a family, I was ten years old, they organized me. "Do you play piano?". "No.". I don't, I don't know if they asked me other question. I said, "No.". And I didn't want to go back. I said these people didn't realise how we lived. My parents had to let us teach piano, you know, we had to live in a terrible condition.



10:56:50:19

Interviewer

So, when you were,

10:56:51:04

Renee Bornstein [*interrupting Interviewer*]

And there, the Swiss didn't understand, you know.

10:56:54:05

Interviewer

So, when you were in Switzerland you were then separated from your sister and your brother?

10:56:56:23

Renee Bornstein

No, no. we are together. Only on a Sunday. They, wouldn't, they didn't come on the Shabbat because we were far away, so where they were located. I never went back, I always wanted to see it. Opposite the Lac. It was a beautiful settings that I remember. But, er, it was not only Jewish children - we were very, only a few Jewish children - the rest was, I don't know if they were orphans, what they were.

10:57:23:22

Interviewer

So, now we're in August 1944, on the 25th August, France was liberated.

10:57:30:13

Renee Bornstein

Yes. And we went into, I think the 20th August, we went to Switzerland. Because, er, L'Haut Savoie was liberated the 20th August. You know, each province was separate, er, different time.

10:57:44:19

Interviewer

And at this point you had the opportunity to meet your parents again?

10:57:48:16

Renee Bornstein

Not,

10:57:49:05

Interviewer

Not quite?

10:57:50:04

Renee Bornstein

No. Only November. And somebody must, er, take us to my parents because



Geneve and Limoges, we didn't go yet, there was no plane, it was far away, I remember.

10:58:00:17

Interviewer

How were you reunited?

10:58:03:00

Renee Bornstein

They took us to my parents.

10:58:04:13

Interviewer

But, through what means did you connect with your family? Was it the Red Cross, was it?

10:58:09:10

Renee Bornstein [*talking over each other*]

Yes. The Red Cross. Yes. They look after us. I don't remember really. I thought I should have, if, but, years, some, sometimes, with less memory than I, I find, er, I don't remember how we, I don't, I remember somebody took us, was it a man who took us, obviously, to my parents.

10:58:29:12

Interviewer

And through that whole time, even though, it had been absolutely terrible and the experiences a child should never have, you were still, the three of you, with your brother and your sister?

10:58:39:22

Renee Bornstein

Yes, and that made also, gave us a big comfort, we gave to each other a comfort.

10:58:46:13

Interviewer

Does that make you now, very, very close? I know there is now another sister, as well but, the three of you, are you very bonded because of that experience?

10:58:55:02

Renee Bornstein

I think, er, we are. We are, we, I am very bonded to my sisters but, I don't think it's, er, it's only this experience because we were separated for many, many years also.

10:59:06:19

Interviewer

So, then tell me about the reunion. The Red Cross located your parents. You were



taken to them. Do you remember seeing them again?

10:59:13:07

Renee Bornstein

Er, my parents. Oh, it was a big joy. That I remember, I remember my parents were crying from joy, yeah. Oh, we were very moved, yes. It was a big, big joy. I cannot, you co, you know, you can't believe that it happened.

10:59:31:05

Interviewer

Can you describe it?

10:59:33:16

Renee Bornstein

I can't, no, I can't really, describe it. I was very, very, as a child I was happy and relieved to be with my parents. It was, to, to, back to a normal life. I didn't even realise, you know. Human, I always think human being, whatever you are, in which situation, you are so quickly, A human being can be adjusted in any situation, that, that is my experience from my life. But I, we had a, I think a joy which you can't explain. I don't remember you know, how it was, that I am very honest with you.

11:00:08:21

Interviewer

Can you say a little bit more about what you've said because it's very interesting that, I think you have just said that "we can adapt very quickly to whichever experience we are in."? Do you think that is grownups, as well as children or, particularly, children can adapt very quickly?

11:00:28:02

Renee Bornstein

It, I would say, "Thank God.", as a, I can see, I think both adapt very quickly. I can say, er, in my life I could, adjusted very quickly but, as a child, even quicker as an adult. Yes, we got adjusted. You know, wherever we were, we just, we just, we were adapt, our, but sometimes, I astonish myself when I think about the past, how we were adjustable.

11:00:57:10

Interviewer

And I think that probably,

11:00:58:07

Renee Bornstein *[interrupting Interviewer]*

And without, er, suffering too much. You know, as an adult you've got, you get adjust but, you suffer sometimes, about the other patient. But, as a child - no. I don't remember that we suffered. We suffered but, we just got a, er, adjusted, even in prison, I remember we didn't cry, you know. It was all, that was a most horrible experience in my life was the prison. I don't know, you know, er, I knew that it was only one little, er, make up thing in my, my head, a little wash basin, small, cold



water and the toilet was holes but I I don't remember if we washed or not washed. That I can't remember. I think we went to bed, I'm not sure, with, er, with clothes.

11:01:50:24

Interviewer

I guess it is quite comforting that children adjust quickly because it, it's heartbreaking to think of children suffering; but, if children find a way of coping much quicker then that is some comfort?

11:02:06:14

Renee Bornstein

Because we always hope that, I know we, we always, you know, we lived in the hope we will see soon our parents. It's always was in our mind. To each other we said, "Very soon, it's finished. We will see *papa, maman*." That was, er, always a, but it's true that human being are, are adjust, er, my experience, very adjustable.

11:02:30:21

Interviewer

Nevertheless, when you reflect on your life and you think back to what it must have been like for a ten-year-old, it's unimaginable to think that you,

11:02:42:03

Renee Bornstein [interrupting Interviewer]

Today, yeah, it's easy now, today, I find yes, it is. But, you know, at the time we were just happy to escape and to be in life. You know, we're grateful to be in life. That I must tell you. That was the biggest thing, er, hope to be in life because life is something very strong, even if you are young, as a child it is in the human being in you, you want to live, you want to survive. And you will do everything and anything. But we were lucky we were not, er, long in prison. That was our big, big, er, luck, that it was end of the war. I don't know, otherwise, because that was something terrible. Did you see the list? They did, er, I have it here. They made a list in this, er, prison and the children they brought - they took - they didn't write our names, they wrote *Jüdische kinder* - Jewish children they wrote: 32 I think. And Marianne Cohn, she change her name in Marianne Cohn because Cohn is a very Jewish name.

11:03:56:02

Interviewer

Can you say a little bit more about the instinct of a child wanting to survive? Again, because there are other people who I've interviewed, who say the same thing. That even when you are a child your desire to live is so strong.

11:04:11:10

Renee Bornstein

Yes. It is.

11:04:12:10

Interviewer

Can you explain a little bit more about that?



11:04:17:06

Renee Bornstein

In fact, I cannot, er, I don't know how to explain it, I have to be honest with you. It is strong because of hope. The hope, you hope, you know, you will see your parents. That, as a child, that was my only hope. I should see my parents and that gave you the will to live.

11:04:36:09

Interviewer

And were you aware that you might die?

11:04:39:09

Renee Bornstein

Yes. We, that we were in prison one hundred percent. My sister said to me, um, "We don't say, don't, we don't, you don't need to look after the best dress. We are going to die.". That we were very, if, if I was conscience, then she would remind me. "Don't look after the best dress. We are going to die.". We were passionate that we are going to die in this prison. That is true, as a ch, child. We were confronted with the basic stuff that already, in Limoges you know, when they tell us we're going to die, so it followed, it follows a child. You live with that. If you want it or not.

11:05:20:40

Interviewer

How does that feel of, to be ten and to be told you're going to die?

11:05:25:24

Renee Bornstein

Today, it is hard you know, it is, today, I feel very hard when I think about it. At the time, er, you live with it. But, we have always hope, we always had hope. He said we were going to, in the prison I don't think, the hope was not there that I have to be honest. In the, the prison. Impossible when Marianne Cohn said say everything and we saw her beaten up and she said it. We suf, we suffered to see her like that. But you know the boys who were with us, they, they even, we girls we encounter less than the boys who are with us, the same age: 11-years-old. A man was take, was, er, beaten naked and, er, he, from all his body was one of the biggest, er, Underground man, not Jewish. French man. And he was, er, beaten so much and they put him as a [?] but, it's a hand scarf and, er, he, he couldn't walk. And then they asked a boy of 11, "You give him water.". He had to give him water, he took his hand and, er, he couldn't because the hands were...and this man said, "How are you?". He said to the boy, "Are you feeling alright?". And the little boy, he said, "Oh, I have to ask how you feel.". And shortly after, he was taken. They killed him. First, they beat him so up and then they killed him. They were so *bestialisch* and it was all in this prison it happened.

11:07:00:09

Interviewer

I don't understand about the 11-year-old boy was asked to give him water. Why?



11:07:05:07

Renee Bornstein [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Yes. Because he needed a testimony to give to this man who they beat up so much, to give this man a water to, to help him, probably, I don't know. At first, they beat him up and then they ask him to give him water. I don't know why. They were just bestialisch and they killed him. But, he was with us, this boy, And the boys, they make them work, you know, the work, you know, the boys and beat them. But the girls they didn't beat. We were not beaten.

11:07:35:11

Interviewer

What about your brother?

11:07:37:05

Renee Bornstein

No. he was nine years old. He was younger.

11:07:41:16

Interviewer

Do you remember feeling very protective to him?

11:07:44:09

Renee Bornstein

Yes. I was. He never complained. Er, he never spoke about him - about it. Also, was with him, he's a year younger than I, and when he was, like last year I spend a few days with him but, we never spoke, you see. I never, er, we never spoke about that past - with none of them. None of them, I want to, don't want to speak about it. Er, me too, I didn't ask and he didn't ask. Nobody started to speak about that. It's a horrible, er, ordeal in our life, er, horrible, er, it's something you don't like to remember. That's why you understand that I've buried it. I didn't want to speak about it because all these, all these horrendous things come to,

11:08:35:23

Interviewer

And now that you are talking about it, is it very, very difficult for you or is it a relief to be able to speak?

11:08:42:08

Renee Bornstein

Now, now it's a relief, I must say. First, it was terrible and now that I've said it, it's a relief, yeah. I just hope it will never, never happen again. That's my only wish, my biggest wish to anybody in the world. If they are black or yellow, they are all human being, you know. I am a pacifist, a born pacifist, always. And, and you know, and the Jews they were all pacifists more. *Enfin*, but, you know, we always sit, we learned, very early to suffer because we are Jewish. Why are we suffering? Just bec, because we are Jewish. And, er, my mother used to tell us, Hitler used to say to people, "If people answer you, it, it's not their fault that they are Jewish, they are



born like that. Don't have any pity with them.". And that was like that, you know. It is just that because you are Jewish, the Jews have always s, suffered, that is for me, a terrible thing [pause] and yet, they contribute so much to humanity.

11:09:56:19

Interviewer

After you were reunited with your parents, um, your mother would have discovered and your father would have discovered about their family, is that right?

11:10:07:20

Renee Bornstein

Yes, afterwards, yes.

11:10:08:21

Interviewer

Do you remember that?

11:10:10:09

Renee Bornstein

Yes. It was very sad when, I remember my father didn't show his, in front of us, his emotion but my mother, she couldn't refrain herself, yeah. It was terrible for her. She was also, you know, it was, the family, we were very, er, closer than, maybe, today you know. Families they lived together and there was a togetherness. They said when my mother and [*kin of mine?*] when, when they saw her, they used to say, "Oh, your mother was a saint.", they call her. And, you know, 33 already, Hitler forbid the Jews to greet the non-Jews. So, my mother, er, when she went to the parents, she walk, she said the w, "I was brought up like that, Renee." I knew it as a child, to walk like that and one woman said, "In case, it was *kilometres*", you know, it was nothing, even buying food you reach it. And one woman said to my mother, and mother was called Frida, "You don't say hello to me.". My mother said, "I would love to say hello to you but, I don't want you to get in trouble because of me.". That's my sh, my choice. "I want to say he; I want you to say hello to me.". They will not say that she wanted to show solidarity. We had, er, we had family who were hidden in Heidelberg. Er, a mother and a daughter, three years in attic. The parents hire, hired them and the children were fanatic Hitlerjugend from it, er, and they didn't know that the parents hide Jews. There were people who were extraordinary, you know. You find in each; you can't condemn all of them. That I make a difference, that I don't condemn, there were amazing people everywhere. I had another family e, escaped in Italy. He was, he hide himself in a garden. He noticed a German out there and he hide in the garden and when he noticed, he come in the garden, he h, hide behind a bush and heard the German saying, "he must be not far because the peels of his apple are still wet.". But they didn't catch him. But, it was always, so yes, so many stories. But, my story is, should humanity, if they should ever, ever, er, to be afraid of this monster, this horrible, er, thing. But, you know, what I learned was so that in all war, it's always a continued who are affected the first.

11:12:44:02

Interviewer

Say that again?



11:12:44:23

Renee Bornstein

The continuitate, the continuitates, I mean the children are always the first to be attacked. You can look in all the countries, the children.

11:13:02:13

Interviewer

And that gives us a unique insight into the depths that humanity can plunge.

11:13:10:10

Renee Bornstein

Yeah.

11:13:12:00

Interviewer

That you can attack a child?

11:13:14:09

Renee Bornstein

Yes. It's unbelievable. They used to say the people from Goethe, the people from Beethoven, they named them. How was they able to do that, such a *monstrosité*. They were monsters.

11:13:30:00

Interviewer

But just your unique experience of, if you just talk about your prison experience. You had the worst and the best of humanity?

11:13:40:05

Renee Bornstein

Yeah. It's true. I had the two extremes, that's true...I had wonderful people and I had the worst here. I had Jean Deffaugt and Marianne Cohn, they were just, er, exceptional, er, people. I can't, I can't find a good word, er, a better word for them.

11:14:02:06

Interviewer

What did that do to your childhood?

11:14:06:21

Renee Bornstein

It affected my childhood, yeah. I w, will never played, you know, I never was a child that played. I was, er, I never play, I don't know, everybody they are different but I was a child who never played again. And that affected me, I can say that I couldn't play with my children and, and with the grandchildren. I'm a person who can't play.

11:14:31:18

Interviewer



Still?

11:14:32:16

Renee Bornstein

It pains you. Still. I don't like to play. I can't play. I hardly played. But, my sister played, you know, different.

11:14:43:00

Interviewer [*Talking over each other*]

What do you mean that you don't play with your children and your grandchildren? You find it very difficult?

11:14:48:23

Renee Bornstein

It's not in my nature, I think. I think it's because of, er, what happened to me. That, I, I think it's that. Because, before I was a normal child who liked to play. And, I was a nun, with a nun in school, in school and in the break the nun used to play with us with *balon*, with a balloon you know, each break. They were very nice, er, nuns, can't fault them. When they wanted to baptise them as, the biggest er, archbishop of France was Jewish with a brother in Israel. But they like to baptise the Jew, the Jews.

11:15:38:15

Interviewer

Did you ever seek any - counselling is the wrong word - but, has anybody ever helped you with your experiences?

11:15:46:01

Renee Bornstein

No. After the war we need it. No. never. It didn't exist. It didn't even exist when I lost my husband. I would need somebody, I lost my father and my husband in two months, I would need somebody. Believe me I was, and it was very sudden, a heart attack with my husband. They said he will live until he is 80, and eight days he was not here. But, er, I needed, I would need c, counselling but, it didn't exist. I didn't know. It was not something common, you know. I knew, I knew the psychiatrist. We, my husband brought in a WRV because this, he studied medicine and when he did psychiatry, the psychiatrist ask him, "where were you?". And he told him to write it down. So, I knew and this man will invite, he invited us, once a year, and we invited him, er, the same, er, once a year. I knew that he's a psychiatrist but, it was no treatment, nothing to help. I was a person who would er, need it because I think I had, er, anxiety when I lost my husband and father. The responsibility was very big for me. It was like, you know, I live in a lovely castle of cards and one minute of the other, seconds went down, finished. The responsibility I find is very hard but, you know, as I said, my children are very good. They notice it's a tragedy and children conform then, you know.

11:17:14:15

Interviewer



You strike me as being so composed.

11:17:18:16

Renee Bornstein

You are very kind, you know, but, I have, I always said you have to take the life as it come and takes the most of it. My parents always told us to be, er, grateful for what you have. You know, we were not brought up always to be grateful what you have and not, and to be, always we, we always er, tried to be nice with people, to be helpful if we can.

11:17:46:10

Interviewer

And I mean, sure, let's talk about your husband now. But I'm sure that meeting your husband and having your children helped you in some way recover.

11:17:57:03

Renee Bornstein

Oh, yes, it did, yeah.

11:17:57:22

Interviewer

Composure.

11:17:59:00

Renee Bornstein

Yeah. That's helps me a lot. That was the biggest, in my life, er, it was the, the greatest, er, joy and achievement with children, yeah. Because I didn't think I would have, you know, in my oh, so little mind.

11:18:14:05

Interviewer

How did you meet Ernest? Ernst? Ernst?

11:18:17:16

Renee Bornstein

Yeah, Ernst. *[interrupting Interviewer]*

11:18:18:02

Interviewer

How did you meet?

11:18:18:10

Renee Bornstein

I met him in Strasbourg. Er, it was, er, friends who introduced me. I don't know, I met his friend, it was a funny conference, it was what the difference between a black and a Jew. And through this conference and he said, "Oh, I have somebody for you." And I made, I couldn't make my mind straightaway because he lives in Germany. So it took me one year to make my mind and my father said. "But the nicest person you,



you met." he said. And my husband said, I'm not married with Germany. It was no, er, you know, at the time it was not, the Common Market was not er, didn't exist then, then and so recognition, recognition from the exams, he had to redo his exams if he would go in another country. But he, er, but then came the Common Market, and that was I think, '77. And he died '78. And in '78 he said, er, "When the eldest...", - my daughter was 12, when my father, my husband died - he said, "When the eldest is 13 we have to leave Germany to give them a religious education.". You know, it was very hard in Germany but, the most of the population was old survivor . But, they never spoke of or say it, even until this day, nobody spoke about the past. It's funny you know, it's not only me. But, the whole of the population, they avoided, they were, some were very good, successful, and some could not readjust in normal life.

11:19:47:10

Interviewer

I think there's lots of reasons for that. That people were protecting their children, people needed to move on with their lives. It's a very common story. But you loved him enough to move to Munich.

11:19:59:00

Renee Bornstein

Moved to Munich.

11:19:59:14

Interviewer [*talking over each other*]

How was that, to be in Germany?

11:20:01:09

Renee Bornstein

The first years was very hard for me because I saw all this is Mayer. When, when I saw a man with blue eyes, in my little head of ten years, if, I saw a 50-year-old, I thought of, and when I saw these blue eyes, I saw the uniform. And I never said it to my husband and I think, until I had children it was two to three years it follows me and then it was, er, finished with that.

11:20:24:12

Interviewer

It looks like you've exorcised a ghost.

11:20:26:15

Renee Bornstein

Yes. I was liberated with this man. Yes, it was terrible. He had, you know it is a disgrace that they call him the Blue Eyes, which I didn't know already, even today, that they called him the Blue Eye, the Blue Eyes. A very unusual, er, person has this blue eyes. And one speak very well French, you know, well-educated people who are bestial like I don't know what.

11:20:52:14

Interviewer



Tell me a little bit about your children, and how much of your experience you shared with them?

11:21:00:08

Renee Bornstein

My personal experience of this story, I didn't tell them, no. I didn't share it with them.

11:21:05:22

Interviewer

Ever?

11:21:06:22

Renee Bornstein

I don't remember. Noemie will tell you. You can ask her. I don't remember, I'm not conscience that I share it with them. Maybe, I, in the late, now that they hear my stories since two years but, before I don't think.

11:21:20:13

Interviewer

Do you think that was the right thing to do?

11:21:23:02

Renee Bornstein

No. I should tell them young. You know, it would be better. I think it's wrong. I was, I am wrong. You should tell your children. It would be even better but, I don't know why, I couldn't tell you why I didn't tell it. I didn't even live with that. I really, like a mental block, you know, it's, I blocked it completely.

11:21:43:04

Interviewer

What was it that prompted you to start talking?

11:21:47:22

Renee Bornstein

I don't know, I think, er, I, I don't what, er, with relent, or relentlessly I started.

11:21:54:21

Interviewer

Reluctantly?

11:21:55:13

Renee Bornstein

Yeah. For the first time but, I said it and my, my son noticed that I was very nervous like I am now. He said you spoke a lot of French words, he could, when I'm nervous I can't find the English words. And then I spoke in, er, Israel, in um, in the synagogue, not in Israel, I refuse, also. I said I can't. It's too much one after the other. I spoke and it was a, a wife of the rabbi, she's from Holland and also, her father was in Auschwitz, so she know, she said, "Ask me question and I'll prefer to answer them



because I don't want to read because not nice.". But, er, and she, she did it.

11:22:35:20

Interviewer

And now do you feel a sense of responsibility to share your story more?

11:22:40:12

Renee Bornstein

I should say more. In the right place you know. I can't say it when I am in a private, er, people no. yeah, I should say it. But I never heard people speak, er, the people who were in camp or I knew, I had friends who were in Auschwitz, they never spoke, er, one-to-one about the experience. I never heard them. And I know many. And my best friends, they were all in camp. Never one, er, my best friend she was one year in Auschwitz, she was from Hungarian, so the Hungarian were taken at the end. It was, France was already liberated, they killed 1,000,000 er, Hungarian. And she told me, er, one year they were there. But otherwise she told me how she find her brother. I, I just ask her, "Did you have a brother or sister?". The, the brother died the day of the Liberation, she told me. The young, 18-year-old boy. But, otherwise, we never, er, spoke, we speak about it. My husband, he was active, so he probably, I don't know, he didn't speak about the past, they spoke, it should never happened again. He, he made a little paper each year. he spoke in Dachau each year and he spoke in the Kryst, of the Kristallnacht, he spoke. He was a very active but, er, in the daily life, never. [Pause] I don't think many survivors spoke in daily life about the experience. I think they must, went on with their life.

11:24:19:06

Interviewer

Um. Can I say you speak unbelievably powerfully and with so much, um, insight into humanity from a child's perspective, for you to remember so much and for you to be able to speak now is very powerful.

11:24:36:20

Renee Bornstein [*interrupting Interviewer*]

Yes, I remember, thank you, you are very kind. I remember very well, you know but, I think when a human being has a trauma, you remember. I am astonished. My son was seven years when I lost my husband and he remember papa said that and papa said that. And I think I can, I am astonished but, I know with myself I was older and I remember, the fact you know how it was when you have a short trauma in your life.

[cut for direction]

11:25:01:19

Interviewer

Can I ask you just one more question. Through everything that you have experienced, do you still have a strong faith?

11:25:10:23

Renee Bornstein



Yes. Yes, I have. I have a, I said, er, sometimes, I, you know, I say sometimes, honestly, when I hear about all this millions of people disappeared, I said "Where was God?". I had to ask myself a few times, you know. I shouldn't ask this question but I do.

11:25:30:08

Interviewer

What is your answer?

11:25:31:12

Renee Bornstein

No answer. I have no answer. I have no answer but, still Judaism is something very deep, you can't help it, you are still. Like my husband, he wrote in his book, he lost, he lost, er, he, he - *la foix comme on dit?* - he lost, he lost um, er, he didn't believe in, he, he lost, he lost, er, to believe in God. He lost to believe in humanity in a certain time, I don't remember. He lost it, yes. And he said, also, the same as me. He came back here, many years after. I knew many people who lost it, became completely secular and suddenly, er, went back you know, because it's something [*French word*] very deep in you. Some left it, some converted to, and there were also many people, a few people who converted to, a dif, to a different religion. They said they don't want the children to suffer again because they are Jewish. But, Hitler, little did they know but, I, er, Hitler didn't know, didn't went until the fifth generation, if somebody was Jewish he would take of them.

11:26:41:13

Interviewer

With everything that you have been through, have you ever, with the loss of your grandparents, have you ever been offered any kind of compensation from the Germans?

11:26:51:17

Renee Bornstein

No. not me. Not for my grandparents.

11:2:52:15

Interviewer

Would you want it?

11:26:53:09

Renee Bornstein [*interrupting Interviewer*]

My, my mother but, very little, you know, they give very, very little compensation for my par, um, god parents. my mother tried very hard and she deserved it. No, they give very small pension, you know.

11:27:11:12

Interviewer

Is there anything that you were expecting to say, that you were preparing to say in

this interview that I haven't asked you, yet?

11:27:19:00

Renee Bornstein

No, you ask me everything. I must say you are a marvellous interviewer. I couldn't say more. I say thank you very much for listening. And, I hope, as I said, that all, if all the humanity would learn something of this. That's only my wish because I can't bare it when I switch on the television. Whatever it is when I heard whatever country it affected me - you know terrible - er, they kill that, er, what's going on in Africa, it just, it's so, so barbaric. And also the children and the girls, you can't see what happen in Nigeria. They took 200 girls you know, with no reason.

11:28:01:03

Interviewer

And it must be so depressing to have been through that yourself,

11:28:05;09

Renee Bornstein

Yes, it is depressive. That, er, time it affect me when I see that. I can't bear it to see when they take children. It affect me more, much more than others. Also, others with it's a terrible scene.

11:28:18:03

Interviewer

Because it's innocence that's taken?

11:28:20:08

Renee Bornstein

Yeah. But thank God we live here. I think it would be no war. But I hope they help the others. I very often think, Syria people, look five years how they were killing. They didn't help. If they would help they wouldn't have all the refugee. But, er, you know Merkel, well, I think she wants to look, she's humanist, she wants to show that's Germany not the Holocaust and she's took over 2,000,000 of refugee. She will lose her, er, probably she's fed up anyway but, she won't, probably, not be re-elected. But she said Israel is my *raison d'être* huh?

11:28:57:08

Interviewer

She's trying.

- END OF INTERVIEW -

ARTEFACTS

ARTEFACT 1: scan of a photograph of her school with Soeur Therese in the middle

11:29:00:17

Renee Bornstein

That was where I went to a school [...] It was a school for the refugee children, that we were by then known. [...] it was called Alsace Lorraine, like I will say [...] Lancashire, Yorkshire. [...] I was six years old so it must be 1940. And I remember she was called Soeur Therese. I remember her very well. I was six years old but I had her four years. She was so nice you know. [...] she played with us in the [...] break, and [...] she used to say er, "If moys would know how good er ham is he would allow you to eat ham." [*Laughs*] That I remember. She said it very often. She was a very nice person you know, didn't mean anything bad. She didn't want to convert us, not she. [...] She was young, nice.

ARTEFACT 2: scan of a list of the prisoners held in Prison du Paix, Annemasse, 1944

11:29:54:19

Renee Bornstein

That is a list of the people who were in the prison [...] All the people were mentioned by name. We Jewish children were mentioned by Jüdische Kinden - It means Jewish children [...] we had no name; we just was Jewish children. [...] Juden, Juden. The others they write er, in they wrote oh, French, French, Italian, but the most of them were French [...] And we, we were two lines of Jewish [-] children. And then it's written [...] some were liberated, but they don't write when they were killed, they write just liberated.

ARTEFACT 3: scan of page of an article about Marianne Cohn

11:30:37:17

Renee Bornstein

[...] I read an article from Marianne Cohn, who happened er 1944. [...] it's about her life when she was born, what she did, and when she came to [...] France. She's born in Germany, and she's [...] she emigrated 1934 in Spain with her family, and when [...] it was a war in Spain, the family er left to France. In 1939, [...] the parents were interned [...] in Gurs. It was a camp where the German Jews were interned. And [...] she was er with a Jewish scout, [er artist] They lived in [*Moissac?*] [...] She was a special person you know. I remember how she was dressed; you know the colour of her blouse. It was pink and with little dots. You know I remember that very well [...] I was pleased to see her again to be honest it reminds me. I felt pleased and very sad the same time because she's not among us, lost her life so young. Gave the life for us children. They could save her you know at the time. [...]

Renee Bornstein iv

she suffered so much. [*clears throat*] When you think what she went through and er



how she was killed it was just er terrible. And she saved before us 200 children. You know I want absolutely to go and see Annemasse. I never went back since that. This year I said I decided, I would like to go back. I will ask er how It er... who shall I address you know when I come back. And to go to er a, I would like to go also to the, how do you call it, le *tombe* of Jean Deffaught, the mayor, to pay my respect. Er he sa, he saved our life also this man.

ARTEFACT 4: scan of a newspaper article quoting a poem by Renee Bornstein

11:32:37:17

Renee Bornstein

That is a poem written by Marianne Cohn, in November 1943.

Je trahirai demain pas aujourd'hui.
Aujourd'hui, arrachez-moi les ongles,
Je ne trahirai pas.

Vous ne savez pas le bout de mon courage.
Moi je sais.
Vous êtes cinq mains dures avec des bagues.
Vous avez aux pieds des chaussures
Avec des clous.

Je trahirai demain, pas aujourd'hui,
Demain.
Il me faut la nuit pour me résoudre,
Il ne faut pas moins d'une nuit
Pour renier, pour abjurer, pour trahir.

Pour renier mes amis,
Pour abjurer le pain et le vin,
Pour trahir la vie,
Pour mourir.

Je trahirai demain, pas aujourd'hui.
La lime est sous le carreau,
La lime n'est pas pour le barreau,
La lime n'est pas pour le bourreau,
La lime est pour mon poignet.

Aujourd'hui je n'ai rien à dire,
Je trahirai demain.

c'est triste [...]

very sad.

Renee Bornstein iv

Sad to know it's ca... such a short life, she suffered so much, for a highly intelligent

girl.

ARTEFACT 5: English translation of part of Marianne Cohn's poem

11:33:42:21

Renee Bornstein o/o/v

By Marianne Cohn, poem *I Will Betray Tomorrow*, November '43.

I will betray tomorrow but not today. Today you can tear my nails off, but I will not betray. You don't know the depths of my courage, I know. You are five hard hands with rings. On your feet you wear shoes with nails. I will betray tomorrow, not today. Tomorrow I need a night, not less than one night.

[...]she suffered so much because they killed her in a horrible way. Yeah. She said, "Can I take my toothbrush?" They said, "You won't need it." They killed her. A dog is not killed like they killed her. They beat her up before they killed her.

Renee Bornstein iv

[...] They have a school in Annemasse who were her name, and a road where er where her name. And er in Berlin they did a school who were her name. And er in Israel they have Yad Vashem where the Holocaust Museum is. They, A garden is named after her.

ARTEFACT 6: scan of an article from a French newspaper about Les "enfants du Pax" 19 Aout 1994

No commentary

ARTEFACT 7: scan of an article from a French newspaper about Les "enfants du Pax" 26 Aout 1994

No commentary

ARTEFACT 8: scan of an article from a French newspaper about Marianne Cohn, Aout, 1994

No commentary

ARTEFACT 9: scan of an article 'Hommage a Marianne Cohn'

No commentary

ARTEFACT 10: scan of details of a subscription for a memorial forest in Israel

No commentary

ARTEFACT 11: scan of an undated article about Marianne Cohn's rescue of Jewish children

No commentary

Caption: DAILY LIFE IN WARTIME FRANCE

10:19:01:07

Renee Bornstein

They were very good. My parents they always said that the people were wonderful, also where we lived. We were er, we were first three, then we were four, then the fifth was already born in Strasbourg. But we, we lived in this er house, and the



ground floor was a family without children, and my mother said, "Oh, I'm so embarrassed." We had no, In the wartime in France, you didn't have shoes, er leather shoes. We had er wood. Er the shoes were made with big wood. And sometimes with children it was a big room, when we fight [LAUGHS] we're running the table, and these people were said were angel never said a word. They were very nice people. They also er understand our er also the, the life we lead er we lived you know; they had a lot of compassion [...] Yeah. I remember it was Family Richard, Famil, Family Richard.