

-TITLE- LOEBEL RUDOLPH YERAHMIEL
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-NOTES-
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1:00 Calls himself Rudolf Loebel. Father called him Yirack Miramaw. Usually he prefers to use his Hebrew name rather than the German due to the events in Germany between 1933 to 1945.

2:00 Americans have difficulty pronouncing his Hebrew name, however, so he just began calling himself Rudolf again, or Rudy to be short. He was born in Plauen, Saxony in 1927.

3:00 His parents were married by a matchmaker. His family, including his grandparents, had had the intention of immigrating to America but stayed in Germany because it seemed to be such a pleasant place for Jewish people.

4:00 He started school in 1933. Even as a child he could recognize the changes when the Nazi's assumed power. He remembers the fierce street fights between the Nazis and the Communists the years before the Nazi victory in 1933.

5:00 He remembers the months before Hitler's seizure of power as his neighbors all began flying Nazi flags outside their home.

6:00 As a child he was very surprised at how quickly fervent Communists became fervent Nazis, flying huge swastikas outside their homes.

7:00 Talks of his home life. He had a traditional Jewish home. His mother was very religious.

8:00 His father was more a pragmatist, but was highly respectful towards religion. His mother would refuse to serve nonKosher meat during bad times, even if it meant going hungry. Talks of beginning school.

9:00 At school the swastika was prominently displayed. The school principal would often where his Nazi uniform to school.

10:00 Remembers how at a young age the school would indoctrinate the children with racial theory. At the end of one racial theory class he and another Jewish friend were ganged up on by their classmates.

11:00 Recalls another incident with an older boy. The incident began because the class was discussing whether Yerahmiel was a full, half or quarter Jew. He responded proudly that he was a full Jew.

12:00 The older boy in the class told him that he was going to beat him up after school because of his response. Yerahmiel accepted the fight thinking he would have no peace if he showed cowardice. He lost horribly, but the older boy never bothered him again.

13:00 Remembers how the teacher would make remarks on inferior races in class. He never argued with the teacher but feels that it destroyed his self image, causing problems in his schoolwork.

14:00 This mental block carried over into his Hebrew studies at "the temple".

15:00 He talks about his learning problems at Hebrew school. Recalls that the only time he was interested was when the story of Samson was taught.

16:00 The story interested him because he was completely in love with a girl in his class, but was terribly shy. He'd time leaving for school so that he could walk alongside her, but he never talked to her.

17:00 He had daydreams of being strong like Samson so that he could rescue this girl from the Nazis.

18:00 He talks about his religious education and how much he hated it. He did find that the more the Jewish community was persecuted the closer it came together.

19:00 He did like to go to the temple on Saturdays for Shabat.

20:00 He recalls affectionately the man who would read the children stories on Saturday afternoon. After a pause, he says that the date that most sticks out in his mind during these years is 10 November 1938.

21:00 On that date he was preparing to go to school when a pounding was heard at the door. Two Gestapo were there who were very polite. They said that his father should get dressed and that they needed to search the home for weapons.

22:00 He feels that his father knew the men as the conversation had a familiarity to it. The Gestapo took his father to the city prison, though the family only found out later. Just as he was about to leave for school his little Jewish friend, Greenburg, came running to the house crying. Greenburg said that he went to school and all the students and teachers were going to go watch the temple burn, en masse, as a celebration.

23:00 Yerahmiel begins to cry at this memory. Laughs through the tears saying, "Funny thing is, I hated to go to that place."

24:00 He comments that the temple was probably like a home for him.

25:00 His mother told Greenburg to go home since his parents were probably worried about him. Yerahmiel says that he didn't realize how much the temple burning affected him at the time. After Greenburg left, some other people came.

26:00 His mother told the children to try to get out. 9-10 Gestapo came into the house. He said that he felt that some of them must have known his family as they spread out immediately to all the rooms as if they knew the house.

27:00 The Gestapo began to systematically destroy everything in the apartment. His mother told him to get out again. He ran under the arm of a Gestapo who was blocking the door in order to escape.

28:00 The city only had 150 Jewish families so they didn't have any Jewish neighbors. He recalls his two German "friends" who had a year or two earlier turned against him.

29:00 He was very close to these two friends. They used to play soccer, steal little things from stores, harass girls. His friends, however, joined the Hitler youth and began to receive heavy racial indoctrination.

30:00 After one day when they told him that since he was Jewish he would have to walk behind them, he quit playing with them and played with the cat. Thus he didn't know where to go when he escaped.

31:00 One of his four sisters, who had escaped through the window, had a married friend they went to stay with. The husband was a Nazi party member who had a shrine for Hitler in the house, so they could only stay during the day.

32:00 Later that day they went to check out their house. Yerahmiel was sent as a scout since they figured a child would be less harassed than young adults. He found the house in shamble and reported back to his sister.

33:00 They returned and barricaded the doors and windows to their house with intact furniture. Recalls an earlier incident where someone had almost killed his sister by throwing a rock through the window at night. They spent the night there.

34:00 Their oldest brother Yitzhak, now David, was lucky enough to be able to go to Israel a few months before. He still didn't know where the rest of his family were however. The next day the police told them that their father was in prison and that they could bring him food.

35:00 They had very little money and most of the food in the house was destroyed, so they could take their father little. They left the food with the jailers and only got to see their father once in 2 weeks. Father was sent to Buchenwald later for the sole crime of being Jewish.

36:00 About ten days later they received a card from their mother in Antwerp with instructions of who to go see in Germany.

37:00 Mother raised money to pay for a smuggler to take them from Germany to Belgium. Their mother wrote in a covered way since the Nazis read all mail. She told them to travel to Koln. She gave an address their of a garage there. They stopped in Leipzig along the way to get a little money from relatives who were living underground.

38:00 The garage was closed in Koln, but they noticed large numbers of people with suitcases going into a building nearby. There they found a large building full of Jewish refugees trying to get into Belgium.

39:00 He saw a little girl there and walked over to her and kissed her. He can't explain this action except through loneliness. The next day they went to the garage to meet the smuggler.

40:00 The smuggler drove them to Aachen, where they joined other Jews trying to get into Belgium. There he heard tales of smuggling operations gone awry.

41:00 Germany allowed Jews to leave at that time if they didn't take any valuables and not more than 10 marks. He didn't have any money, but someone who had too much gave him ten marks. The German border patrol confiscated the rest.

42:00 They had a six hour night hike, but the smuggler knew his way well.

43:00 He recalls that he kept thinking of one tune over and over during the hike. He recognized years later as the ". They eventually came to a clearing where they boarded a truck.

44:00 The truck was stopped several times, but boxes were placed to hid the people. Belgian law at the time allowed people in the cities to stay, but if caught near the border, people were to be sent back to the country of origin.

45:00 The truck dropped them off at a house in Antwerp early in the morning. The family at the house was poor but make them very welcome and said they could stay as long as they wanted.

46:00 Their mother came the next day. Her apartment wasn't big enough for everyone so his brother and he stayed in an attic at a different house.

47:00 Later he move in with another Jewish family by day and only went home to sleep. He was enrolled in Hebrew school but couldn't handle the language.

48:00 He transferred to a public school and once he had learned Flemish, he went back to Hebrew school.

49:00 He reminisces that he was completely addicted to comics, especially Superman. He convinced his mother that by reading them he would learn Flemish quicker, so that she would buy them. Biggest regret when he left Antwerp was having to leave those comics.

50:00 In January, 1940 he went to Bar Mitzvah. Father was still in Buchenwald. Says that his father needed a country that would accept him in order to be let out of Buchenwald.

51:00 His mother went to all the consulates to get a visa. Finally the consular from some South American country took pity on his mother and gave her a visa for her husband on the condition he used it only to get out of Buchenwald. His father got out and came to Belgium. His mother also got her father and his second wife out of Germany.

52:00 His grandfather had given up on Yerahmiel of ever becoming a "real" Jew because he played with non-Jews and couldn't speak Hebrew, but at his Bar Mitzvah when he read from the Torah, his grandfather started crying.

53:00 This was the last time the family was together because a short time later the Nazis invaded Belgium.

54:00 His father put everyone on the last train out of Antwerp. His mother was hesitant at going because her father wouldn't come. He said he was tired of running. Yerahmiel becomes emotional here and they take a break.

1:00 His grandfather decided that he didn't want to run again. Family got on the last train out of Antwerp.

2:00 It was a 7 day journey from Antwerp to southern France due to German air attacks upon their civilian train.

3:00 The train had to back up often when it found a blown bridge. One time the train collided with another train.

4:00 They finally stopped in La Roche. The only family member who spoke some French was his oldest sister.

5:00 From there they walked about an hour to some small houses. They met a very friendly family there who took them in. He went to school there in a one room school house. Their mother told them to say that they were Belgian and not to mention Germany. His teacher found out that he was from Germany, however, and often spoke German with him in order to brush up on his German language skills.

6:00 The children there were very nice. He had a good friendship with a young French girl. He learned a little French there though the language of the area wasn't French.

7:00 The French police, the Gendarmes, came to enter them in a camp finally since they were Germans. His mother tried to explain that they were Jewish and persecuted by the Germans to no avail. He had a fever so the police let his mother and him stay behind while the rest of the family was taken to the camp.

8:00 As the Germans advanced, all the Jewish families in La Roche pulled their money to buy a bus to take them to the port of Bayonne in order to get out of France to America or England.

9:00 They went to the English consulate in Bayonne. Thousands were there trying to get visas to leave on 2 English ships. They didn't get a visa, but found out later that one of the ships was sunk by a German U-Boat. He said his mother would have refused to go anyway since she didn't know where her husband and daughters were.

10:00 His sisters were eventually released from camps because his sister continually pestered the commandant, saying that her father was serving in the English army so they had no right to lock up his family. His mother decided that everyone should go to Luchon to be with other Jewish families since she felt it wasn't good to be isolated.

11:00 Their region fell into the "Free French" area after the French capitulated.

12:00 They found a small apartment in Luchon and he felt it would have been a great place to stay throughout the war. However, the police came again. This time not because they were Germans but because they were Jews. All the Jews in the town were placed in cattle cars to be shipped to internment camps.

13:00 He especially recalls one young couple who were so in love that they were oblivious to what was happening around them.

14:00 When the train stopped they were let out in the rain. They then walked for 2-3 hours to Clearfon Camp, close to Toulouse.

15:00 They were assigned to a barracks. He bunked with his sisters in order to keep warm. They were fed a poor soup and bread. In the camp were some veterans of the Spanish Civil War who showed them how to adjust to camp life.

16:00 He's not sure how long he stayed at this camp, but one day they moved to the Red Cross camp which was much better. They had to soon leave, though, since they weren't Belgian or French.

17:00 They moved back to a bigger camp near Toulouse. It was about the same as the first camp, but more heavily guarded. The guards were from Alsace-Lorraine and sympathized with the Germans. Families would try to get privacy by hanging blankets as wall at the camp.

18:00 The Swiss Red cross came one day and gave him some treats. Recalls especially a piece of Swiss cheese which seemed like the most precious thing in the world at the time. At that time there were rumors in the camp of Jewish resettlement to the east.

19:00 His mother found out that the prefect in Lyon was not as hateful towards the Jews as the one in Toulouse. His mother got a little money together and sent him and his oldest sister to Lyon. They escaped from the camp and took a train into Toulouse.

20:00 They were lost in Toulouse. His sister decided to try the Salvation Army. He wanted to return to his mother. His sister tried to explain to him that this wasn't possible, but he left her and went back to the train station.

21:00 A Gendarme picked him up. He asked to go back to his mother. They questioned him in order to find his sister. He gave them all wrong information to protect her.

22:00 The Gendarme took him to a nunnery where he ate and spent the night. The Gendarme came for him the next morning.

23:00 The Gendarme and a nun took him back to the camp. His mother was ecstatic to see him.

24:00 He later found out that his sister made it to Lyon where she got a job in a sack factory. His mother told him that she could not leave as 2 of his sisters were sick, but that he should go stay with Liba, his sister in Lyon.

25:00 He got to Lyon safely. His sister had a little apartment there. She tried to find some work for him in Lyon.

26:00 In Lyon he met the head of the French jewish resistance He called himself Chameau. (French for "the Camel") The Camel was a chemistry professor before the war. He had rented an old run down farm to hide Jewish children near Lyon.

27:29 He talks about life at the farm. He liked the Camel who believed in hard work. 20-40 children were on the farm from all over Europe and from all types of backgrounds. He talks about some of the children he met there.

30:00 One child who was a musical genius was also a genius at getting food. The farm did not produce much that was edible.

31:00 Other farmers wouldn't sell them food. Food was extremely scarce.

32:00 He feels that it was the first in France that Jews attempted to live Kibbutz style. He began school again under the Camel, but the language was again very difficult.

33:00 He recalls his lessons at the school.

34:00 He shows the only picture he has of this time, showing Chameau teaching his charges. Chameau had been heavily assimilated, but before the war became very interested in Jewish history.

35:00 He recalls how the group was part of the resistance and how the children would volunteer for the most dangerous assignments. Usually they would just carry messages.

36:00 Recalls how Germans and collaborators would at times seal off blocks of the city in order to check everyone's identity papers street by street. All people without papers identifying them as non-Jews were sent to concentration camps. His father was sent in one of these sweeps.

37:00 Major activity for resistance was forging passable papers for Jews. The Germans, however, would begin to call up the city halls of the towns of origin on suspicious papers. Hence the papers needed to be perfect.

38:00 In one town they found an anti-Nazi secretary who would arrange the books in the city hall to include hundreds of Jews for the papers. Yerahmiel says that he feels that about 50% of the French were collaborators and the other 50% tried to help the Jews when they could.

39:00 The Gendarme in the town was helpful. He would warn Chameau a day in advance of Gestapo sweeps so that the children could scatter. In the summer of 1942 Chameau informed his charges that all the Jews being transported out of France were being killed. One of the underground had attached himself to a train and then made his way back to report what was happening to the people.

40:00 Chameau told them if a train came for them they were to get their false papers and make to the woods for armed resistance

41:00 Chameau had given them a lot of paramilitary training in case they had to join the resistance full time. They accomplished this through the Youth of Petain movement in Vichy France. Liba married a Jewish man in the fall of 1942.

42:00 That same fall his mother told him that she didn't want him to remain in France, but rather go to Switzerland. She wrote to him in a veiled form saying to visit Liba and then Aunt Schweiz. Schweiz being German for Switzerland.

43:00 Told Chameau that his mother wanted him to go to Switzerland. Chameau wouldn't give him an I.D. card because it would endanger the whole group if he was caught. Told him to write to his mother and explain that he was safe. His mother wrote back and insisted that he go.

44:00 He went to Lyon where his father had been release three months earlier. He didn't have any I.D. papers and knew that all the trains from Lyon to Switzerland were being checked.

45:00 His father tried to talk him out of it. He went on the train and it was searched from head to toe. People were being hand cuffed and escorted away for being Jews.

46:00 He his in the bathroom and when they gave up knocking on the door and moved on, he moved to the area they had already checked. Recalls in his youthful stupidity the only I.D. he had on him was his German birth certificate. Had the Gestapo asked him for I.D. he says he would have given them the certificate even though his French was now good enough to pass him as French.

47:00 The border train station was surrounded. People were again being taken away who were suspected of being Jewish. The French police were doing most of the work he recalls.

48:00 He was to scared to get off the train, but at the last second his brother-in-law who lived in the town grabbed him off the train and they ran into a cafe where they ordered something. When his brother-in-law saw an opening on the street between the gendarmes, they ran away to his apartment where Yerahmiel wasn't allowed to leave for 10 days and nights.

49:00 His brother-in-law wouldn't allow him to step outside. This was torture since he was used to the open fields in France.

50:00 Eventually his brother-in-law hired a smuggler. The smuggler was a fraud. Was supposed to take him to Geneva but he didn't even cross the border. Swiss had a policy then that those under 16 and over 60 could stay in Switzerland.

51:00 He was being smuggled with 2 other. Smuggler took them a half mile from the border. There they were told to lie in the grass until the church bells tolled 3:00 a.m. and then they were to take off their shoes and head across the border. After taking off their shoes they walked right into barbed wire.

52:00 After marching along a road for an hour they met up with a soldier with his pistol drawn. he thought the soldier was German and thought they had fallen into a trap. The soldier told them to come along with him. The soldier was Swiss.

53:00 At the police station the border patrol called their Geneva boss. They told Yerahmiel that he could stay, but the other two were too old and would have to go back. They cried and he told the patrolman that if they went back, he would too. The patrolman told them that he would take them to the border, implying that they could do what they wanted after that.

54:00 The next day he met his two friends in a Geneva camp. The patrolman had walked them to the border where he left them. They in turn had walked all the way to Geneva. Yerahmiel spent the rest of the war in Switzerland.

55:00 After the war he joined a group that went to Israel since he had family there. He joined a Kibbutz and the Hagganah.

56:00 He joined the army and served 2 years, even after the '48 war due to his age.

57:00 In his final statement he says that he appreciates freedom a lot more than the average person now and that he carries scars. Not physically but emotionally. He feels that these scars interfere constantly with his life. They surface at awkward moments.

10 November 1938, the date of Kristallnacht. On that day he was preparing to go to school when two Gestapo came to the door. They came to search the house for weapons and insisted that his father get dressed. While this was going on, a Jewish friend of his came to the house crying. His class at school was all marching down to the street where their synagogue was in order to watch the temple burn in celebration. After his friend had given this news and left, some more Gestapo showed up at the door. His mother yelled at the children to get out of the house when these Gestapo agents showed up. Yerahmiel was able to escape along with a sister, but they had no where to go. They didn't live in a Jewish neighborhood and all of Yerahmiel's close friends in the neighborhood had turned against him in the previous years since he was Jewish. His sister finally found a married friend who took them into her home, but only during the day. Her husband was a Nazi party member with a shrine to Hitler in the house so they had to leave before he returned in the evening. He and his sister went back to the house to check out the damage. He was sent ahead as a scout since he was the youngest and found that the house had been almost completely demolished on the inside. His sister and he barricaded the windows and doors with intact furniture and spent the night there. They still didn't know where the rest of the family was, but their oldest brother Yitzhak was lucky enough to be able to have gone to Israel a few months before. The next day the police came by to tell them that their father was in Jail for the sole crime of being Jewish and that they could bring him food if they wanted. As their bank accounts had already been confiscated, and the food in the house had been destroyed, they were not able to take him much. For two weeks they took food to their father, but they only got to see him once as they usually just left the food with the jailers. Ten days after Kristallnacht they received a letter from their mother who was in Antwerp instructing them on where to go and whom to see in Germany. Their mother had hired a smuggler in order to get them out of Germany and they were to make their way to Koln in order to meet him at a garage. After stopping in Leipzig to get some money from relatives living there, they arrived in Koln. The garage there was closed but they found a warehouse full of Jewish refugees trying to flee Germany. They stayed there for the night and the next day went to meet the smuggler.

The smuggler drove them to Aachen where they joined some other Jews trying to get into Belgium. Germany allowed Jews at that time to leave Germany as long as they didn't take valuables or more than ten marks, thus the only major obstacle was the Belgian border patrol. The Belgians at the time had a policy that people who were in the cities could stay, but if people were caught near the border trying to get in they would be sent back to their country of origin. After redistributing money among each other so that no one had more than ten marks, the smuggler took the Jewish refugees on a six hour night hike. Yerahmiel had heard stories of smuggling operations gone awry, but this smuggler knew his way well, bypassing major obstacles. They found a truck waiting in a clearing which they boarded. The truck drove them to Antwerp where it let them out at a house in the early morning. The truck had been stopped many times along the way, but the people were well hidden behind boxes and crates and weren't found. The family at the house where he was let off was very poor, but very hospitable. They said he could stay there as long as he liked, but the next day his mother came for him.

Since his mother's apartment was too small he slept in the attic at another house. Later he moved in with another Jewish family by day and only returned to the other house to sleep at night. He was enrolled in Hebrew school, but the language was too difficult so he changed to a public school. After he had learned Flemish he went back to Hebrew school. At this time he had a large addiction to comic books, especially Superman, and he had convinced his mother that he would learn the language faster if she bought them for him. His biggest regret in leaving Antwerp was leaving these comics behind. His father was still in Buchenwald when they arrived in Antwerp, but he would be released if another country would take him. His mother tried all the consulates in Antwerp to no avail. Finally the consular from some South American country took pity on his mother and gave her a visa for her husband on the condition he used it only to get out of Buchenwald. His father was released, along with his grandfather and his second wife, and they came to Antwerp. In January of 1942 Yerahmiel went to Bar Mitzvah. His Grandfather had given up on him ever becoming a "real" Jew since his Hebrew was so poor and he played with non-Jews, however, when Yerahmiel read from the Torah at his Bar Mitzvah his grandfather began crying. It was the last time the family was together because shortly thereafter they had to flee Antwerp since the Nazis had invaded Belgium. They got on the last train out of Antwerp, leaving their grandfather behind who said he was too tired to continue running. From Antwerp it was a seven day journey to southern France due to German air attacks upon their civilian train. The train would often have to back up and find alternative routes as bridges and track were out all over, and one time the train even collided with another train.

They finally got off in La Roche and walked to a village about an hour away. They met a very friendly family there who took them in. Yerahmiel started school again there in a one room school house. The children there were very nice and he began to learn a little French even though the language of the area wasn't French. His mother had warned them to tell everyone that they were Belgian and not German, but his teacher found out.

Shortly thereafter the French police came to inter them in a camp since they were Germans. His mother told them that they were Jews and therefore persecuted by the Germans, but the police refused to listen. Yerahmiel had a fever however, so the police allowed his mother to stay with him in the city while the rest of the family was transported to the camp. As the Germans advanced into France the Jewish families in the village all pooled their money in order to buy a bus to take them to Bayonne so that they could escape to England or America. When they arrived in Bayonne they found thousands at the English consulate all trying to get visas to leave on the only two English ships in Bayonne. They weren't able to get on either of the ships, which was just as well since one was later sunk by a German U-boat.

His sisters were soon able to join them in Bayonne since his older sister so badgered the camp commandant with her protestations that her father was serving in the English army against the Germans. When they arrived his mother decided to take the family to Luchon in order to be with other Jewish families since she felt it wasn't good to be isolated. When France fell Luchon was in the "Free French" area. His mother got an apartment in Luchon, but soon the police came again. This time because they were Jewish instead of German.

All the Jews were placed in cattle cars and taken to a camp near Toulouse. They had to walk three hours in the rain in order to reach their barracks, where he bunked with his sisters in order to keep warm. Camp life was tough, but there was a group of veterans from the Spanish Civil War there who showed his family how to adjust to camp life. After they had stayed at this camp for a while, they moved to a Red Cross camp. Conditions were better there, but they weren't allowed to stay since they weren't Belgian or French.

They thus moved back to a larger camp near Toulouse. This one was more heavily guarded by men from Alsace-Lorraine and hence, German sympathizers. Rumors were rampant in the camp about Jewish resettlement to the east. His mother soon got word that the prefect in Lyon was not hateful towards Jews. She then decided that he and his sister should escape from the camp and make their way to Lyon. They escaped without incidence, but in Toulouse Yerahmiel decided that he wanted to return to his mother, and so abandoned his sister at the train station. The police picked him up, and interrogated him in order to find his sister. He gave them all wrong information so that they weren't able to find her. The police kept him for the night in a nunnery and the next day returned him to his mother at the camp.

They later found out that his sister had made it to Lyon. Since his other two sisters were sick, his mother could not leave but she insisted that he should try to make it to Lyon. He got there safely where he met his sister who was working in a sack factory. He also met the head of the French Jewish resistance in Lyon, who called himself Chameau, French for the "Camel".

The Camel had rented an old farm near Lyon where he hid Jewish children from all over Europe. At the time he had around 20-40 children at the farm. Life was hard on the farm as it could not grow much that was edible and other farmers wouldn't sell to them as food was extremely scarce. Chameau taught the children as if they were in a regular school. The language was again difficult for Yerahmiel, but he has fond memories of this period. The group was part of the regular French resistance and the children would often undertake missions for the cause, mainly running messages.

At this time the Germans and French collaborators began the practice of closing off entire city blocks in order to check everyone's papers from house to house and street to street. Those who didn't have papers identifying them as non-Jews were taken to concentration camps. His father was picked up in one of these sweeps. A major activity of the resistance, then, was forging passable papers for Jews. The papers had to become perfect as the Germans began the practice of calling the town of origin's city hall to verify the information on suspicious papers. In one town, however, the resistance found an anti-Nazi secretary in the city hall who would rearrange the books to include hundreds of Jews as non-Jewish French citizens. In addition the Gendarme in Lyon was helpful as he would warn Chameau a day in advance of sweeps so that the Jews could disperse.

In the summer of 1942, Chameau told everyone at the farm that all the Jews being transported out of France were being killed. A member of the resistance had stowed away on one of the trains bound for the concentration camps and had returned to report on what he found there. Chameau told the Children at the farm that if a train came for them they were to get their false I.D. papers and then head for the woods to become a part of the armed resistance. For this contingency the children had been receiving paramilitary training under the auspices of Youth of Petain.

In the fall of 1942, Yerahmiel's mother wrote him to say that she wanted him to go to Switzerland and not stay in France. She wrote in a veiled way so that the Gestapo wouldn't understand, calling Switzerland "Aunt Schweiz". Chameau wouldn't give him an I.D. card for the voyage since he felt it would endanger everyone at the farm, and thus told him to write his mother back and explain that he was safe at the farm. His mother wrote back insisting that he go to Switzerland.

He went to Lyon where his father had been released three months earlier. His father tried to talk him out of going since all the trains from Lyon to Switzerland were searched very carefully. Sure enough, the train he used was searched from head to toe by the Gestapo who were arresting all people they suspected of being Jews. Yerahmiel hid in the bathroom and after the Gestapo grew tired of trying to open the door and moved on, he moved to the part of the train they had already searched. This was an amazing stroke of luck, for in his youthful stupidity the only I.D. Yerahmiel had on him was his German birth certificate, even though his French was good enough to pass him off as French.

At the border train station he was too scared to leave the train as the French police were arresting Jews in large numbers there too. At the last second, however, his brother-in-law who lived in the city grabbed him off the train and they ran into a cafe. When it was clear to move out from the cafe they left and went to his brother-in-law's apartment. Yerahmiel wasn't allowed to leave the apartment for 10 days and nights, which was pure torture after living in the fields of France.

His brother-in-law finally hired a smuggler who turned out to be a fraud and took him and two other Jews only close to the border where he told them to wait until three in the morning and then cross the border bare footed and head to Geneva. At 3:00 they moved across the border, crossing right into some barbed wire. They soon ran into a policeman who they at first feared was German. It turned out that he was Swiss and he took them to the police station.

The border patrol called their headquarters in Geneva for instructions. Swiss policy at the time said that those under 16 and over 60 could stay in Switzerland. Yerahmiel made the age requirement, but the other two Jews didn't. Yerahmiel was determined to return with his two new friends, but the border patrol insisted that they were going to "walk them to the border." Implying that the Jews could do what ever they wanted after that. Yerahmiel stayed and two days later saw his two friend in a refugee camp in Geneva. The border patrol had walked them to the Swiss-French border and when they had left, they had walked to Geneva.

Yerahmiel stayed the rest of the war in Switzerland. After the war he went to Israel where he joined a Kibbutz and then the Hagganah. In the '48 War he joined the army where he stayed for two years. He married and his family has helped him immensely in dealing with the emotional scars of the Holocaust, however, he believes that his experiences have given him a greater sense of freedom than the average person.
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