

-TITLE- JEAN BOETE
-I_DATE- 7/7/88
-SOURCE- CHRISTIAN RESCUERS PROJECT
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY- FAIR
-IMAGE_QUALITY- GOOD
-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES- FRENCH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-

Jean Boete was a student in Paris in 1940, and fled to the countryside to avoid being deported to Germany. Under the influence of a very intelligent Jew named Alain Mosse (served as the chief of the cabinet of the Prefect of France, he joined the resistance. In 1942 the planned to fight as a soldier in North Africa. At Mosse's request, he took a government post so that he could have access to papers and stamps to assist with the escape of the Jewish children. When he became known to the police he went to Paris, and assisted in fighting the Germans during the liberation. Served in the French army in occupied Germany after the war.

01:00 Born in 1921, when he was very young his family moved to Paris. His father worked in a printing shop his mother was a nurse. He says that they were not much influence on him. (His responses are usually only one word, and specifics must be asked for).

04:00 He had friends and schoolmates that were Jews, but his parents didn't really know any. He was involved with sports before the war.

06:00 He did not see any anti-Semitism before the war.

09:00 His family was Catholic but not very religious. He did not think that there was any person that was influential into his life.

11:00 His father was 'nice' and agreeable. His studies were important. His university career stopped in 1940. He had heard on the radio that young men would be deported to Germany to work. He left Paris on a bicycle in June 1940, and went to stay with his grandmother and his aunt.

14:00 He did not see his parents until 1944. This was not difficult, because he was an adult.

16:00 The area of France was not occupied by Germany. He completed his studies and received his Baccalaureate. In 1941, he went into the military service, which was forced - this was considered normal.

18:00 He met Alain Mosse, a 21 year old Jew who was the director of the cabinet of the Prefect.

19:00 November 1942, the Germans invaded the prefecture, but Italians occupied the region he was in. The Italians were more favorable to Jews.

21:00 Mosse could no longer be in the government administration -
January 1941. Mosse became the regional head of a general union of Jews in Chambéry (ph) to help Jewish children leave France to Switzerland, Italy and Israel.

23:00 This was legal. The Italians had an accord to allow this to happen.

24:00 Boete joined the resistance. Helped to save children from the mountains.

25:00 He left Chantilles and Genessee (ph) when he knew he would be sent to Germany. He and two friends were planning to go through Spain to fight in North Africa.

27:00 He went to Mosse before he left. Mosse asked him to stay to help the Jewish children leave France.

28:00 Mosse put him in the prefecture (Mosse himself could not because he was a Jew) where he would have access to the papers and stamps to help get the children out of the country.

29:00 The police noticed his activities. They went to his grandmother's house. He went to Paris to lose himself in the crowd.

30:00 He was asked by the interviewer why he put himself at risk. His answer was agreeing with several reasons that the interviewer gave.

31:00 The Germans came to Chantilles and Genessee in June 1943.

32:00 Why didn't others join resistance? Fear, he had some, but he overcame it. He doesn't know how he overcame it.

34:00 He helped with the liberation of Paris. Molotov cocktails. This was an exciting time-getting the Germans out and freeing an oppressed people.

35:00 Mosse was arrested in February 1944, he never came back. His mother died last year.

36:00 In the mountains he hid people, but does not know if they were Jews or not. The Jews did not have to hide under the Italians. Under the Germans he was not there, so he doesn't know.

38:00 He does not know who the papers were for which he prepared when he worked for the prefecture - they used fake names.

40:00 Asked if he saw any violence tom or roundup of, Jews. In Paris he did, but not in his town. The Jews had been rounded up in Paris in 1942, so there were not many Jews in Paris in 1943 and 1944.

41:00 After the war he continued his studies - in oral surgery. He lived with his parents. He spent one year in the army in occupied Germany in 1945, looking for war criminals.

42:00 He does not have warm feeling for the Germans. There were very few German men after the war. They were either prisoners of war, or the men had limbs missing.

43:00 He was in the hospital for 5 months in 1945 with a leg wound. He did not walk easily. Was in an office, looking for war criminals.

44:00 He looked for them himself (not in the office the whole time).

45:00 This was a happy time for him. At 25 stress is not a big thing.

47:00 He didn't do anything dangerous after the war. He was married, and has a son in Paris.

48:00 He doesn't thinks about the wartime. Certainly, he talked about it immediately after the war. His friends did the same thing as him, so they agreed with what he had done.

49:00 The war changed him. He learned responsibility, and very quickly went from an adolescent to a mature person. Did it change his view of people? Yes.

50:00 Some people were more interested in their own food than in the Jews.

51:00 Asked if he had a story he would tell or if he would want his children to know about it - he said that to him it seemed natural to help people.
Did he think about fear? Not really, but he thought about how to be careful.

52:00 He didn't ask others to help. Mosse had trusted him because he (Boete) had great admiration for Mosse- he was chief of the cabinet of the Prefect when he was 21; he had great intelligence.

54:00 He would have preferred to be in North Africa (being more active), but when Mosse asked him, he agreed to work in the office. He could have been jailed in Spain (on his way to Africa) for 6 months- and done nothing.

56:00 If it happened again, would he have any advice? No, it is from your own heart.

57:00 "Would life be different without the war? "Certainly."

58:00 He knew of the troubles of the Jews, but not the concentration camps.
Talking to hotel owners.

1:00:00 He was happiest when he had his son.

1:01:00 You can't say you like war, but you see what people are really like - whether a person is strong or weak. He never knew any collaborators.

1:03:00 Men born between 1921-1923 were being deported to Germany to work. Resistance was small before this, but grew as a result.

1:04:00 Would he have helped Jews without Mosse? If he had had the opportunity, yes, but he probably would not have had the opportunity.

1:05:00 Is there value in telling about the Holocaust? Yes, What? It is interesting as history, 1940-1945 is important for all the world, but not well enough known.

1:07:00 He received a medal and will plant a tree in Israel.

1:09:00 How does it feel to receive the medal 45 years later? It is still close to him. He received the Legion of Honor only a few years ago.

1:11:00 Asked how many Jews he saved. "I didn't do it myself."

1:12:00 He moved here 11 years ago from Paris, likes it better here.

Photographs taken - "it's hard not to smile."
He wears his grandmother's cross around his neck.

1:15:00 Was his grandmother an influence on him? Family in general was how? He lived with them and was attached to them.

1:16:00 Is love the most important thing? What love, there are many different kinds of love. Love of family is serious.

They plan to get some documents on Alain Mosse from a friend.

The second tape of Jean Boete has no interview, only footage taken while driving in a car with the radio on.

The tape dit not show the time, but these are accurate.

At the end of the interview with Jean Boete (on the first tape) is part fo an interview with a woman and two men from Utrecht in the Netherlands. Much of it is not clearly translated.

1:17:00 One of the men said he would have preffered death to living in a society under the Nazis.

1:19:00 The woman said that the most beautiful thing you can do is to help others. God asks you to do these things and you don't think about your own life.

1:21:00 Before they had tried to forget the past, and think of the future, but now they have told their children. War is so different that it is very hard to tell it to someone who has not experienced it.

1:23:00 All three believe that you had to do something for the Jews, or anyone else.

1:25:00 They don't want to honored 40 years later.

.END.