

## Interview with Mrs. Annie GOLDMANN on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Paris, France

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Annie Taïeb was born in Tunis on May 31, 1931 to Maurice Taïeb and Hilda née Smadja. The beginning of the interview describes in detail Annie's ancestors from an Algerian Jewish family that had settled in Tunisia. She mentions that they were French citizens because of the Crémieux Decree which bestowed French nationality on all Jews born in Algeria in 1870.

Her grandfather, Mardochée Smadja, founded the newspaper "La Justice" in 1907 in homage to Georges Clemenceau, a pro-Dreyfusard. He believed that Tunisian Jews should assimilate modern French culture and enter the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that secular education was the key. He wanted the French authorities to extend French citizenship to Jews in the Protectorate of Tunisia. Apparently, he was friends with Emile Zola.<sup>1</sup>

Juliette Smadja, Annie's maternal aunt, was the first woman to become a lawyer in Africa.

The Taiëb family were also fervent supporters of France. Maurice's brother Eugène, living with what funds his Tunisian family could scrape together, studied art in Paris and volunteered to serve in World War I. He died in combat and was awarded the *Croix de guerre*, but the family refused to take the pension which comes with this honor.

Maurice Taïeb studied pharmacology in Toulouse and Paris and then returned to Tunisia. He married in 1928 and purchased a pharmacy in the town of Mateur, a military port between Tunis and Bizerte. He imported medicine and the basic products to fulfill prescriptions from France. He invented several pharmaceutical products and patented them, producing them in a factory in Tunis. One of his ideas was to place symbols on medicine, packaged in small quantities, so that the population which was illiterate in French and Arabic and did not have much money could ask for the medicine they needed – e.g. an elephant might be on a package of aspirin, a gazelle on something for intestinal disorders.

She remembers that the Resident General of Tunisia [*Admiral Esteva*] made the rounds of Tunisian cities and offered flags and special pins, but that her family would not accept them.

She remembers that her family's apartment was requisitioned and that the Taïeb's were relegated to a small studio in the same building.

When the German occupying forces ordered Jewish men to be called up for forced labor, to dig trenches or clear-up the debris after the ports of Tunis and Bizerte were bombed, the leaders of the

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<sup>1</sup> The dates do not seem to correspond because Ms. Goldmann speaks, at this point, of the period between the two world wars. Zola died of carbon monoxide poisoning in 1902, but it is not impossible that they did know each other and were friends.

Jewish community in Tunis did not realize that nothing was provided for these recruits – neither food, water, basic hygiene, or a doctor or nurse on hand.

Maurice Taïeb had a little car and took charge of the camps around the town of Mateur. The number seemed between 14 and 17. He went to Tunis and pleaded with the community to provide money for these basic necessities. He raised the morale and comforted the young men who had never left home before. He negotiated clemency with the German soldiers for those who tried to escape.

As the Allies advanced and air raids devastated the ports, the men were obliged to clear the ports and the airport runways, even while the raids were taking place. It was essential to free as many of the laborers as possible.

Knowing that the German soldiers were afraid of catching highly-contagious diseases, Maurice Taïeb told them that they a great number of the men in the camps had caught lice or typhus and that they posed a hazard to his troops. This is how he obtained the release of a great number of men.

Ms. Goldmann describes an incident that occurred in the middle of the night, when Maurice was not at home, during the German occupation. An Arab brought a German soldier to their apartment and tried to make her understand that he needed something at the pharmacy and that she needed to open it up immediately. Hilda Taïeb did not speak Arabic or German, the Tunisian only spoke Arabic and the soldier, German. Apparently, they communicated in Latin and Hilda was able to provide the medicine he needed.

Ms. Goldmann remembers an air raid when her family had to seek refuge in the shelters that had been dug in a public park where *boules* was played. She remembers how difficult it was for her grandmother to get into the shelter.

After the raid, the family drove to Tunis and stayed with relatives.  
There is a short description of the moment the Allies entered and Tunisia was liberated.

The second part of the interview describes how Ms. Goldmann renewed her studies, passed the baccalaureate exam, and studied law. She practiced for a while in Tunisia, but was frustrated that she could not succeed in helping her clients and was constantly in contact with human misery. She decided to study psychology with Piaget, in Paris, and then literature.

She describes meeting her husband, a Marxist intellectual original from Romania, 15 years older than she. She speaks about how the writers of the *nouveau roman* and the films of *La nouvelle vague* incited her to become a critic. She later taught university film studies from 1968 to 1978.

When Mitterand was elected in 1981, a profusion of pirate radio stations sprang up and she was involved with broadcasts with *Radio J*.