

RG-50.146.0001

Oral history interview with Maurice Benadon

Summary

Maurice Benadon, born to Jewish parents in 1914, describes his childhood growing up in Thessaloniki (Salonique) Greece where his father worked in textiles; one of four children, Benadon went to a school run by the Jews where he learned French as base language; the family moved to France amidst the crisis (both economic and political) in Greece; his sister married in 1939 and Benadon began to work with her husband; at age 16 he became a communist; his father died in October 1941; as the Germans advanced on Paris, Benadon fled to Côte d'Azur (Nice) with his mother and little sister; his brother was in Lyon; the Nazis arrived in Nice and began to round up the Jews; Benadon went to Lyon to join resistance efforts against the Germans; he describes being stopped by the PPF de Doriot (affiliated with the Gestapo); he was taken to Montluc (in Lyon) and interrogated in the Jewish barracks where he met André Fossard and Marcel Dassault; he was transferred to Drancy then to Auschwitz on July 29 1944; upon his arrival at Birkenau, Benadon describes how women and children were sent directly to the ovens; Benadon was taken to the line on the left where he was shaved and tattooed (Mr. Benadon's number was B 3682); Benadon remained in Auschwitz until October 1944; in the camp, Benadon mentions an organization of resisters who wouldn't let him join because he did not speak Yiddish; he was soon left on his own in the camp; he did not have a skill that could get him double rations; he was placed among the Muslims in Auschwitz; at liberation, he was terribly weak; he had lost all of his teeth; Benadon describes how he has tried to forget most of his time at the camp; Benadon provides a complete schedule of a day at Auschwitz; in October 1944, prisoners evacuated towards East Prussia; an S.S. officer beat Benadon violently; he pulled off a piece of his ear; in 1958, Benadon would suffer from cancer of the ear; with the advancement of the Russians, they were evacuated towards an aviation camp; Benadon suffered from dysentery; they were evacuated to a hospital camp ('camps hôpital'); Benadon was suffering from typhus; in 1945, he was liberated by the French Army; he was dying and the French forces put him in a German hospital in Speyer; he regained his forces and then returned to Paris to the Hotel Lutetia where he was decontaminated; returned to his house; Benadon's girlfriend had given birth 10 days before his arrest; describes desire to see his family, his child, and Salonique again.

English summary provided by Ethan T. Ashley