

So you began your work and--

Yeah. Now, while I was working there, I applied for further funds. I wrote to the Rockefeller Foundation. And one day, a representative of the Rockefeller Foundation walked into the laboratory, straight into Professor Tiffeneau's office and wanted to inquire about me. That's how Tiffeneau learned that my financial situation is very precarious.

And he came to me and said, you didn't tell me. I will give you a small additional--

--stipend.

--stipend. It was very little, but in addition with the rest. And then came [PERSONAL NAME] the Canadian Jew-- and I believe it was then-- and gave me also money to study. I don't know. I have to look that up.

So nevertheless, after each year I had to ask for renewal of that stipend I got from the committee, and an assistant, one principal assistant, Professor Tiffeneau, also worked, like many French scientists do, in industry on the side.

He worked in the pharmaceutical industry in a company called [INAUDIBLE] Kleenex. And he said, why don't you get out there? You get a salary, and you can do research, too, in a way. And finally I decided to go to industry after the second year, and I was in the industry until-- no, '3-- wait a moment. Where are we now?

1934, 1935.

Can I correct myself and say that I was at the University of Paris for three years, from 1933 to 1936? During that time between '33 and '36 did you experience, again, any antisemitism at the university?

Yes, in 1936 there were antisemitic and anti--progressive movement in Paris. That is well-known to any historian. There were demonstrations in Paris. And--

Did you experience anything personally.

These were not-- that was not against the Jews only. It was against Jews, foreigners, the influence of communism, leftist movements, all against that. And one day some students invaded our laboratory, and my colleagues, particularly a good friend of mine of Russian origin who was a student under Tiffeneau, too--

A non-Jew or a Jew?

Non-Jew.

Non-Jew.

A daughter of Jewish-- of Russian non-Jewish refugees. They fled because they were bourgeois and came to Paris. And she led the attack to re-attack these students who attacked us. We took some chlorine, some lacrimating liquid, and--

In other words, you were there when they came in?

I was there, and we all were there. And my friend from Geneva, who gave me the wrong information about Paris-- he was, in the meantime, in Paris, too, and he happened to be there to visit me.

And so they retreated from that tear gas kind of attack that we staged, and then it turned out that Professor Tiffeneau was out of town. He was not there. When he returned, he called in Mademoiselle Chubar, the Russian girl, and said, what happened?

And the attacking student lodged a complaint that they were treated by other students at the university with some

lacrimating liquids. And Chubar explained to Professor Tiffeneau what happened, and all he said-- Mademoiselle, [SPEAKING FRENCH]. Miss, you were perfectly right in doing what you did.

So then, well, that was enough of an experience, I guess. I didn't notice general hostility of French people at large, but there was a movement.

At that time, were you in communication with your parents in Germany? Was it easy to communicate with them?

Yes, I could always--

Mails flowed freely between the countries?

Well, I said in '36-- I told you before that was the same time-- they visited me in Paris. And I told them, it's time to get going. And they thought they had more time than they had, so it was too late for them.

Can you just tell me what happened with your brothers and sisters up to that point? Were they--

My younger brother immigrated to the United States very soon, very shortly after Hitler came to power, and I can look up his story. Then my older brother, who was released from Dachau-- at that time, one could still be released.

When was that?

That doesn't mean that there wasn't terrible things going on in Dachau. It was not an extermination camp, but people were mistreated or kept standing in the cold and--

When was-- what years was-- when was he in Dachau?

Well, he went to Dachau-- can I look it up exactly? It was, I think, in 19-- maybe '38 or something like that. I think it was six months, about, in Dachau or five months. I don't know.

And the story that he tells is that Nazis came to the door, rang the bell, and the mother opened and wanted my older brother to stay behind. And my older brother had told our father to go out through the back door or something and disappear.

And he came forward, in spite of my mother's attempts to have him not there, and he said, my father is not here. Take me instead. And I guess that's what they did. And that's how he got to Dachau, and he told his own story about Dachau, which I can give you.

And his name was Werner?

Werner Cahnmann.

So my mother was-- after her labor camp was shipped to Poland, Lublin or near Lublin, Piaski. I have documentation here. And my father's sister was transported to Theresienstadt. She died there through disease, and lack of hygiene, and-- and my mother was exterminated.

And I have the letters. I could give them to the Holocaust Museum if you want to. Otherwise, I'll give them to the Leo Baeck Institute and-- in the-- I can give them a copy if they want to. The last letters I got from them through the intermediary-- it was people through the Red Cross. I have them here. They are allowed only to write one-- they were allowed to write, I think, once a month or once a week-- I don't know-- only five words or something like that.

While they were in the camp?

While they were in the beginning of Poland. Then we wanted to send our mother some money through some person we

knew in Switzerland, and she wrote us later the money came back with a notice that the mother had died.

And that's how you heard that your mother had died? Was that the way you--

That's right, the way we heard it.

What was your aunt's name, your father's sister?

Kramer, Clementine Kramer. She was a writer. She had published novels, and stories, and very interesting things. And she was an interesting woman, and I have interesting stories about her, too. But if you want to tell me more exactly what you want to know, I'm ready for a second interview and prepare for that particular subject.

We are still in-- you are still in Paris, and it's about, what, 193--

--6. We came up to 1936, when I said I moved to pharmaceutical industry from the university. This industry was headed by a French Jew, and the assistant of Professor Tiffeneau, who also worked there and asked me to join-- he was also a Jew.

Do you remember their names?

Yeah. That Jew is still here. The assistant's name is Paul Weill. W -E-I-L-L

And the one who was the head?

Picard, Monsieur Picard, P-I-C-A-R-D.

He was also Jewish?

He is Jewish.

What was his first name?

And-- well, I think I have to look it up. Lucien, Lucien Picard. And he came here also evading the Nazis from Paris, and he was here and wanted to start a manufacturing business here of the products he used to make in Paris.

And he had asked Monsieur [? Ray ?] to come and join him, and Weill joined him, too. And they were here. But then he had difficulties with Weill, and they had a fight. Weill left, and Picard was in great need of a chemist. So not only for humanitarian reasons but also not entirely for selfish reasons, he paid for my coming to the United States.

And now I have to say that in the meantime-- I don't know whether I get mixed up in time frame again.

Let's cover the time before you come to the--

--in time frame again, but that's what came-- when I came to the United States was much later, in '41. So let's--

Right. We still have a few years before that.

Yeah, yeah.

Let's do 1938, '39.

So I was in Paris until I was told-- oh, no-- yeah, in '39, I was at-- until the Germans decided to end the so-called "Cold War--" French call it Drole de war, the Drole de Guerre-- and to invade Belgium and Holland and go around the fortified Maginot Line where the German and the French soldiers fraternized, even. .

And when this happened, the French became frantic. They interned every German-born person they could get a hold of. When I saw the signs on the street that I had-- that everybody of German-- every [SPEAKING FRENCH] should report to a collection point, I was naive enough to think it doesn't apply to me. I'm a refugee. I'm not a Nazi.

But you were holding a German passport?

Yeah. That's what counted for them. And I am not sure if I still held the German passport. I don't think so, no. I may have already had to give up-- I don't have to check that. When I had to give up my German passport, which was then replaced by a French document, not a French passport but a carte d'identité. And I have this card here, and I can look up exactly when it was issued. It's also in my diary. But I had no time to prepare it all.

Anyhow, no matter whether I had a German passport-- I don't think-- I had a carte d'identité. Finally, I was told I have to go. I must go. So I went there to Stade Colonne, I guess it was, in a stadium near Paris, and it was a real mess there because the French were also not-- not only were the French military largely hostile to the Jews and-- it was a great deal of lack of organization, absolutely.

They were taken by surprise, and nothing was prepared to collect this many people. And so we get fed for a week or 10 days every day some sort of dog food.

There was a whole group of people in the stadium is what you're saying?

Many, many came because all the ones which-- and I see-- while we were there after a few days, police dragged in a few other people who tried to avoid it. Whenever they discovered someone, they brought him in.

So it was all ages, families, young children, older people?

Yes. Yes. And--

Were people very frightened?

Yeah, of course you are frightened if you are-- frightened is not the right word. They were terribly worried about what will happen to them. What will they do with an internment? They were terribly worried. I guess the Japanese Nisei were worried, too, but you couldn't see they were frightened. But they were worried. And so were we. And we--

I believe that my uncle, my mother's brother, who was in Paris-- but he had married a French woman, and either he could avoid for that reason to be interned, or he was interned and soon released. But later on he was re-interned like everybody. I'll come to that later.

How long were you in this stadium?

About 10 days. Then they shipped us on camions to a train. I passed by my old pharmaceutical pharmacy. I saw it there. And then they put us into a cattle train with little holes on top. I don't think they did it to be nasty to us. The French-- they didn't want to torture us. It was a complete misorganization, absolutely, and they couldn't care much. They didn't like-- the military didn't like the Jews. And the lower echelons-- they followed orders. It's always the same thing.

When you were in the stadium, you said they gave you very poor-quality food?

The quality there-- and many other things were bad, the--

Did you sleep on the ground?

--toilet situation. You had to go and sit on top of some big can or something, and I understand that were funny situations, that some-- were some priest with the thing. He fell in. And the strange thing is that, in spite of all that, life

seems to go on, and humor goes on. So they call these big-- these big running courses that they had--

Tracks.

--tracks they run. And Boulevard Boche. Boche is a bad word for the Germans because they had a similar-sounding boulevard in Paris, Boulevard Roch. And they had also in Paris a Boulevard de [FRENCH]. And they called it in the camp the Boulevard des Autres Chiens, of the other dogs.

So somehow you vegetate. Then you were there, and you came to-- became our transport, not everybody. Everybody was sent to other camps in the country or-- I was to send to a camp called Camp [FRENCH].

Did they tell you ahead of time where they were--

Oh, no. They said, you're going someplace. And then we were there and then met some friends from Paris, and they came-- were in the same place. And--

What did you have with you as far as possessions at that time?

Nothing, almost nothing, nothing because-- toothpaste, maybe, and a toothbrush, and the shaver, maybe. That's about all. And I don't-- they took everything from me in the collection-- at the collection point. I didn't take big sums of money with me, obviously.

Then in [FRENCH camp name]], I could write to my aunt in Paris, my French aunt, and I guess she could even send me a little money or something. I could obtain some money.

People in the camp, those who did not have money, tried to make money from co-internees who did have some money. One made a shoeshine stuff, some did some other services for somebody or carried things for someone and got a little money from them.

Were most of the people Jewish?

Yes, I would say the majority was Jewish, but-- I believe the majority was Jewish, but there were a not-unimportant non-Jewish minority there. I guess a couple of real Nazis may have been there, but not so much in that camp, no. It was mostly Jewish.

Later on, in a different camp, there were more Nazis, yeah. No, very few, mostly Jews. And from the Camp [FRENCH]-

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What were the living conditions at this camp?

We--

Were there barracks?

No. It was a stable, a cow stable without cows in it, but the straw was there. And the rats were running around freely, and--

Were the men--

--you had to be very careful, whatever-- to leave no stuff, eating.

Were the men separate from the women?

Yes, in the camps, yes, in different stables, in different camps.

Did you have enough food?

At that came-- by the way, at that camp there were no women. People with women were sent to other camps, like Gurs, for instance, there families were sent to. But people who were single only-- men only were at that camp.

How long were you there?

Well, I can tell you--

Approximately.

--that I was in that camp-- from that camp, after a relatively short time-- it may have been maybe three weeks or so or four weeks-- when did we come to the camp? Did I tell you when I came to the camp?

No.

In '39 I came to the camp, yes.

Do you remember what month, the time of year?

September '39 was when the Germans invaded and they collected us. We were 10 days in the collection camp. And then--

Several weeks?

Something like-- yes. Then something like maybe two weeks in that camp. Then they transferred me and a great number of others to another camp in Bourges, which is not too far away. Camp [FRENCH] is not far from Tour, and Bourges is also not, in that general region.

How did you get from one camp to another?

Oh, they transported us there on some camions or something. I don't know. There's nothing to--

Had you have enough food at that point? Did they give you enough food?

Yes, we had-- well, we had simple food. We were covered. We had to-- I think some of us were sent out with soldiers or some sort of-- to buy certain things.

Did you have to do any kind of work in that first camp?

Yes, we did some work, not too much. They sent us to-- now, again, I mix up. Did we do work already in [FRENCH] or only later on? But I believe we did some work. Particularly, we had to help to maintain the camp. We had to peel potatoes, and cook, and things like that.

Was your health good at that camp?

Yes, health was good, and the people mostly tried to entertain themselves and be happy, so made jokes, and sang, or whatever.

Did any--

Told stories.

Did any-- were any of the Jews observant Jews?

Yes, I guess there were some observant Jews, but I didn't notice them particularly. But there were definitely some Jews who were Orthodox. Yeah, I guess there were some, some that knew a lot of Jewish songs and Yiddish songs. And they sing. And we got-- we could communicate by-- we could communicate by letter to the outside world. We could write. I could even write to Germany, I guess.

Still?

No, no. Wait a moment. No, no, not at that time, no, no. No, not at that time. I could write to the United States at that time, could write to Switzerland, neutral countries.

What were the conditions like in the second camp?

Similar. Well, no, a little-- in a way, it was a big hostel at that time, and apparently not as bad, hygienically speaking. I don't think there were a lot of rats there and stuff like that.

Was it still men-only, single men?

Yes, still single men-only. It was mostly transfer from [FRENCH] to Bourges. And in Bourges, I realized that I could once get permission to go to the cathedral, the famous cathedral. Of course, you wanted to see it. And another guy-- his name was Picard-- also had the idea-- a couple people had the idea, so they said they have to go to service, didn't say we are Jewish. They didn't.

So we had to go to church. So they gave us permission to go there. We could go there. It was a little nonchalant situation. And I attended the [AUDIO OUT].

You were talking about how you went to the cathedral with some friends?

Yeah, and that is all of it. I had no money to give a contribution, so it was a little embarrassing, but we sneaked out. And--

We're most of the men frightened--

Frightened?

At that point, were you--

Well, those who had maybe family somewhere in Paris-- they were terribly worried of what might have happened to them.

How aware were you of what was happening, let's say, in Germany or other places? Did you know what was going on?

In 1936 already, when the Americans-- when the British, the French, and the Italians made a pact with Hitler, the so-called Munich Pact, the next day, I went to the American consulate and applied for a visa. That means I know what was going on. Even it took still three years before-- before the war, the hot war, broke out.

And I went-- but in '36-- three years later, I still-- there was no-- even four years later, there still was no American visa. There was such a long waiting list for Germany. There's nothing doing. I tell you later how I finally came without a visa to America, without a regular visa.

My question was, how were people getting information? Were they reading about it in the newspapers? Would they hear about things on the radio?

Yes, we could-- well, some people-- I don't know if anyone had a radio there, but the soldiers brought us in some newspaper. We could bring in newspaper from the outside, and somebody hears something, and tells the others, and--

So word of mouth.

Yeah.

One of my colleagues was terribly frightened and worried that's a -- And he wanted to escape. And they said, don't be silly, you cannot escape here. You cannot. And finally he stayed. And in Bourges now-- in Bourges-- I remember exactly-- we had to do not only camp duty-- I don't know for [FRENCH], but for Bourges I know we had to do camp duty, cooking, peeling potatoes, and things like that.

And we had to go to the fields, not terribly long, maybe half a day or maybe a short day, and do some work in the fields. And then they brought us back into the camp. And in the camp, the relationship with the soldiers who guarded us was friendly, except one or the other may be nasty. Have to be nasty-- I wrote it in the diary that some were nasty.

But usually were friendly, and we organized some lectures even. And one of my friends, the father of the pianist Claude Frank, who was a lawyer-- he gave a lecture on law, and the soldiers listened in for us. The soldiers listened in and asked all kind of question, how they can solve their matrimonial problems and things like that. So we were highly regarded by those soldiers.

And everything was very bureaucratic. There may have been-- there was-- one or other was nasty, but in general, the common--

Nasty in what sense?

Well, it was just unfriendly. I don't know what it was, whether he was antisemite or whether he didn't need-- or didn't like foreigners, or whether-- or he hated the job we had to do. He was never nice.

And I don't remember the details. I read it in my diary. One day they tried to us to get us to engage in the Foreign Legion. Nobody engaged because it meant, in our mind, it was a mercenary business. You had to engage for the duration of 10 years, no matter war or not war, and we also knew that often criminals engaged in the Foreign Legion. Nobody wanted to be a mercenary. Also, we were all eager to fight against Nazi Germany but not under these conditions.

So one day they came out and said, the law has changed. We changed now. You don't have to engage for 10 years. You can engage for the duration of the war. And as such, you will not part of the French. You will be-- no, that was after-- you can engage for the duration of the war. That was all.

Now, against the advice of my aunt in Paris, who wrote me, don't engage, I try to do something for you, don't engage-- and I waited and waited, and the time came, and I did engage because there was nothing that came through from my aunt. And many others did engage. I don't know how much, maybe half of the camp, maybe 1/3 of the camp. Others did not and remained there.

How large was the camp? Do you remember approximately how many people?

In Bourges?

Just approximately.

Very hard, very-- maybe 50 people, maybe, something like that, and maybe about half or less than half. Or maybe it was only 40 people, and half of them engaged.

So I tried to engage. I volunteered to engage. I wasn't sworn in, didn't sign a contract. But I did undergo a medical



examination whether I'm fit, and I was found fit for foreign-- for the Foreign Legion.

And thereafter, those who did engage, who declared they would engage and did pass the examination were received by the commandant of the camp, Monsieur [FRENCH - PERSONAL NAME]] or GÃ©nÃ©ral [FRENCH]. And he shook hands with everyone, wished them good luck. And they had 48 hours of leave. You are free to go after they sign. No, not sign. I don't know. They are free to go.

But they had to report at the collection camp in Southern France after 48 hours, two days. They had to go wherever they want to go. So they went most of them do Paris, I guess. And I was the last one to be called in.

And when I was called in, the commandant said to me, I have for you a special note order. You are supposed to go to Paris. You have been requested to come to Paris. I have-- no, he didn't even say I have been requested. He said I have got an order from Paris from the [SPEAKING FRENCH], which is a commission, French commission attached to the Ministry of Defense, who sorts out foreigners which can be liberated for civilian work.

And I was told by the commandant of our camp that I have a 30-day leave, not a two-day leave, to go to Paris and didn't get strict instructions what to do there. But I went to Paris, and at least three-- at least two people claimed that they had asked for my release, one was Monsieur Picard, from the French industry.

The other one was the wife of Max Braun who was a leader of the Saar people, Saarlanders, who tried-- worked for independence of the Saar people. And his wife-- I knew his wife very well. She had much connections. And she said--

What were what was their name?

Braun. Braun. And she said she made her husband write to the head of the committee in my favor. And so I believed that Picard was the successful guy. I also knew that Tiffeneau, my professor at university, had intervened for me, but I was not aware that he had requested me for his laboratory.

It turned out later that Monsieur Tiffeneau had asked the head of the CNRS, ComitÃ© nationale de la recherche scientifique. Monsieur Lanvin-- ] I believe [? Lauren-- ?] [INAUDIBLE]-- no, no. Yeah, [INAUDIBLE]-- to try what he can do to get me liberated.

So he had requested me also, but I was never informed who really requested me. So I went to work with the pharmaceutical outfit, and I worked and worked until, one day-- I had to continue my efforts with the help of not actually Picard but another man at the company, who was a former military man and had some connections.

I had to try to get my 30-day leave extended or made it permanent. To do that, I had to make many applications to many different officers, and there was a big non-cooperation between the Department of Defense and the police prefecture in Paris. They worked against each other rather than together. So one inspected me, and the other inspected me, and they came to different conclusions.

Finally, I was told the truth, that I was liberated not for doing private industry work. I was industry to do work of in some official capacity, government supported work, officiel, they called it, travail officiel. And so we decided-- Monsieur Picard, we all decided I'm better off to try to get back to the university.

And while Tiffeneau had not originally asked me to come, my friend, Mademoiselle Chubar, who was still working there and other friends who were still working there asked Tiffeneau, could Hans Cahnmann come back to your laboratory? And he said, yes. He's welcome to come if he wants to.

So within days I had to switch from the pharmaceutical industry to the UniversitÃ© de Paris, and I had to work there. And I worked there happily, and I went still out to the pharmaceutical company occasionally to do-- continue some little work on the side. In fact, we did something there for the government. We made a medication Evipan, which was imported from Germany originally. And they couldn't get it-- it was a fast-acting sleeping pill, Evipal or Evipan. And--

Were you using the name Jean at this point?

Yeah, of course. It was Jean.

When did you start--

You're very alert to notice that I say, would you take Hans Cahnmann? No, they asked, would you take Jean Cahnmann back? And--

When did you first start using the name of Jean?

As I came to Paris.

When you first came to Paris?

Yeah, in the laboratory the-- officially they called me-- in official papers I was Hans but in non-official papers I was-- in non-official contact I was Jean. They called me Jean de la Lune, which means Hans in the Moon--

--the moon.

--because I was so naive in many situations. I didn't even know what the dangers are. And I was in Tiffeneau's laboratory, working there, and one day we had dinner of friends, and somebody came in and told us, the Germans invaded Belgium and Holland. It was May 10, 1940--

--40.

--May 10, 1940. So when that happened-- I don't know how many days thereafter. Very soon thereafter, new signs appeared on the street. Every German-born must again be at a collection point. There even my uncle who married a French woman had to go.

And that was in a different stadium, I think in Orléans, or state Orléans, or whatever the name was. And I will find it in-- and there was a whole mixed bag of people, a lot of Jews and a lot of Nazis. For instance, Gregor-- Otto Strasser was there, the brother of Gregor Strasser, the famous Nazi coworker of Hitler who later became enemy of Hitler where Hitler was after them. They tried to kill them or whatever, and they escaped to France.

And from there--

How long were you in that collection?

That was only a collection point, again only maybe a week or so. And then they transported us to a camp [? Rouchard, ?] and the camp [? Rouchard ?] in middle France somewhere, in the-- near Tour or between Tour-- yeah, near Tour also, not too far from that old camp, [Camp - PLACE NAME] We were transported there.

Now I should say that something happened between my stay in Paris as a free man and my re-internation after the May 10, 1940. What happened-- that they offered, in the meantime-- the French government offered in the meantime for any foreign-born, including German-born refugee, who wants to fight against the Nazis to engage what they called-- in the French army, not in the regular army but in a pioneer corps but meaning doing dirty work for the soldiers but not as a mercenary, considered to be full French citizen.

I was passing the examination for that. I did engage in it. But when I was re-interned after the German attack of Belgium and Holland, I was not yet called to join.

It didn't make any difference that you were Jewish? They still would have had you--

It may have made a difference for joining-- for accepting me. They questioned me a lot before accepting me as a Prestataire. That is the French word for Pioneer Corps-- Auxiliary Corps. So I was accepted.

Other people were called [FRENCH], as they say, under the-- to join the flag, and they had a different fate than I had. I was engaged but waiting to be called up. And I wasn't when I was re-arrested, so I was treated like the others.

So I was in the camp [Rouchard, ?] which was a heavily-guarded camp, together with many Jews and some outspoken anti-Nazi non-Jews, for instance Konrad Heiden, who wrote the book about Hitler, famous book, the first book about Hitler, great anti-Hitler man, and he had to fear for his life, obviously.

And we stayed there doing-- in that camp until the Germans had taken Paris, had advanced beyond Paris, went down South, and were almost facing us. Then we got frightened.

And in the last moment, we got orders from our French commandant to pack up. We are leaving at 2:00 AM in the morning. We had to leave because the Germans would have overrun us. So we packed up whatever we could carry, and this was a very traumatic experience because at 2:00 in the morning we started walking, guarded by French soldiers, not regular soldiers but older veterans, retired veterans. I don't know only-- what's the name for that?

How many of them were there?

Well, we were maybe 50 people, 60, 50 people, something like that. And we had to stand there, and these old auxiliary soldiers, family fathers and frightened themselves-- they had to guard us. And we marched down South, on the road.

And it was dramatic because there was one guy who had a wooden leg, and he had to walk with that wooden leg. And you heard that walking of that wooden leg all the time, and other people carried a lot of stuff. They wanted to save things. And little by little, they had to drop it by the wayside. They couldn't carry it anymore.

So you dropped important, valuable things right on the wayside, and the roads became more and-- well, not yet there, later on, the big-- not yet so crowded by refugees, no. But we came to Poitiers, near Poitiers, and in Poitiers, we were attacked by Italian planes, Mussolini planes.

Not just we were attacked. The roads were-- they shot machine gun fire off the roads. They wanted to probably prevent the refugees to flow-- flowing on or whatever. Mussolini was in alliance with Hitler at that time.

And when that came, we all threw ourselves down on the ground, and the soldiers mostly disappeared. The old soldiers had to guard us. But some stayed, and they went on. But I and three other friends decided not-- to drop out and go our own way, which we did.

And then when we came later way down, further down in Southern France, we met this group again, the general group. But it was completely disorganized.

So I stayed mostly with my group, and we went down South until on I don't know which date. I have to write it down. We got the news that France collapsed, that they are-- completely, that we had a-- a Vichy government was formed, called later on Vichy government under General Pétain and the politician Laval and that there's no war against the Germans anymore.

But we had to go on going South because no matter whether it was-- whether it was the Germans themselves or whether it was a collaborator in France who delivered the people to the Germans, we had to go southward.

And the first place we went to was Montauban because Montauban in Southern France was a place that was-- by word of mouth we heard there is a progressive city government, they accept refugees, they help them. And so we went to Montauban, and we asked some lady whether she would let us sleep in her attic, which she did. And there we slept on the attic.

And this Montauban government indeed was helpful. They had a soup kitchen. They served soups. They tried to help people. And I could go into many details, but I don't want to go into more details except to say that I met there also my uncle and his French wife, who had to leave Paris, too, after occupation. And I stayed with them a little while, too. And-

These people in this town helped the Jews? Even though they knew you were Jewish they still helped you?

Oh, they were-- the city was a socialist government. They had a socialist government. It doesn't mean that the population of Southern France or occupied France was a Nazi population. There were the military, the people who were under the orders of the Vichy government-- they were collaborating.

And some French civilians were collaborating, but many French civilians were hiding the Jews, were helping them. And in my own family I have people who-- where they hid them and we are the parents finally we found out and sent to extermination camp, and the older daughter went with them voluntarily. And the younger daughter was left with some aunt some place, and she lives still in Strasbourg. And I visited her.

So I don't think you want to know very fundamental question. This is well-known, very well-known that there were many people who were helpful in France.