

Interview with JEAN COQUERET
France Documentation Project
French
RG-50.498*0004
Box 2, Tape 1

In this interview, former policeman Jean Coqueret talks about the collaboration of the French police at the time of the German occupation and the later prosecution of these collaborators. He focuses on some specific incidents of aggression against Jews and on antisemitism in France in general. He tries to analyze the distinction between “simple” collaboration and active participation in genocide.

In addition, he presents several personal documents of which some might serve as proof of “secret or passive resistance.”

[03:] 00:42:00 – [03:] 15:00:00

He remembers a colleague from the police being accused of collaboration; describes how the accusation of collaboration changed the lives of several policemen; focuses on his own behavior towards these so-called collaborators; discusses the special units in Paris; comments on their “blind obedience” and on resistance during the German occupation; focuses on the role of the police being between patriotism and obedience; compares the society and police routine before and after the German occupation; focuses on the later careers of collaborators; analyzes obedience, resistance, fear and police behavior during the occupation; weighs up the risks of working for the police department in Paris.

[03:] 15:01:00 – [03:] 22:50:00

He focuses on an incident in July 1944 in which people were arrested and sang the “Marseillaise”; remembers hearing of shootings of prisoners in the prison de la Santé; discusses status of the city of Caen; comments on the resistance transmitting information through correspondence; mentions “ethnic cleansing” operations; analyzes the situation of the police after the liberation; mentions Jean Moulin; analyzes the question and difficult distinction between “simple” collaboration and active participation in genocide; gives his definition of genocide; comments on the ignorance of Jews’ fate after deportation; mentions an incident in which a man who was in the resistance was deported to Fresnes and told them about life in the camps, but did not mention gas chambers.

[03:] 22:51:00 – [03:] 32:35:00

He comments on the nonexistence of antisemitism in France and his not having any personal contact with Jews in the line of duty; discusses again the tolerance of Jews in France; focuses on his worst memories on the period of the German occupation; comments on France being pro-regime, but antiwar; talks about his father's background again and his mother's fear of the regime; remembers some personal incidents in his family around Christmas when they ran out of food and wood; mentions a bad professional experience in which he witnessed the humiliation of a woman.

Box 2, Tape 2

[04:] 00:50:00 – [04:] 08: 50: 00 *[end of recording]*

He comments on France's collaboration in the "final solution"; explains the reasons for collaboration; analyzes the ignorance of the French population; discusses the fact of Jewish deportation by French means of transport; focuses on the persecution of certain people, mentions Bousquet.

He shows some of his personal documents: property papers, food ration cards, bike registration card, exemption card for STO, work permit, armbands, one of the "Commission Parisienne de Libération," (CPL), correspondence by resistance movements, medical records, and other papers and documents to prove "secret or passive resistance."