

## Liliane Esrail

Photographed with her husband Raphael

Wartime Experience: Concentration Camp Survivor

I was born on June 9, 1924 in Biarritz, France. My father was Jean Baptiste Rene BADOIR and my mother Armande Rosalie JAFFE. My brother Henri was born in 1927 and my brother René was born in 1931.

I am descended from a family in which profoundly affected my life from my earliest childhood. My father, a veteran of the 1914-1918 war was gassed in the trenches. He died at age 40 in 1937. A little while later, my mother disappeared in Spain during the war, without anyone ever knowing the place nor reason for her death.

We became from that moment three orphans who were taken in by my grandfather Henri JAFFE who was an innkeeper in Biarritz. This was the Jewish branch of the family since my father was Catholic and my brothers and I had been baptized Catholic. Moreover, I was raised partly in a religious institution at Oloron Sainte Marie, in the Pyrenees Atlantique.

In 1940 at the moment of the armistice in France and during the war, we were in Biarritz. We were together with our grandparents and rarely encountered the other branch of the family (Badour) that lived in Charente. Under the laws of the 'Vichy' government we were not considered Jewish and as a result of that we did not wear the yellow star which was mandatory for all Jewish persons.

My grandfather who ran a hotel was forced to sell it as early as 1941. His business was, as one said, 'Aryanized'. The property was administrated by a managing director named by the Commissioner of Jewish Affairs. It became practically impossible for my grandparents who were ruined financially and morally to live.

On January 10, 1944, a large roundup of Jews occurred. They came to look for my two grandparents. My grandfather was bedridden, seriously ill and my grandmother was nearly blind. In their place the Germans decided to take my two brothers who were respectively 13 and 17 years old. Opposing this arrest and thinking I could be useful in their release, because we were not Jewish, I left with them. Not only couldn't I do anything to help my brothers, but there was never a question of the German's releasing me. We had certificates of "not belonging to the Jewish race" but they never arrived during our internment. After spending ten days at the prison in Bayonne, all three of us were taken to the Camp at Drancy.

It was at Drancy that I met a young man, Raphael ESRAIL, who helped my young brothers in the men's sleeping quarters. (Afterwards he was to play an immense role in my life). We were deported to Auschwitz on the transport, which arrived on February 6th. On the unloading platform the SS choose those who they judged able to work. It was the selection, so often

described by former deportees. Of the 1214 who made up the convoy coming from Drancy, 166 men and 66 women were chosen to enter the Camp. My brothers Henri and Rene didn't enter Auschwitz. Instead, they were gassed the same day.

Life at the camp at Auschwitz cannot be recounted. I lived through terrible periods, in particular during the months when I was in an earth moving workgroup. During this time, we worked 10-11 hours a day building roads. In April/May 1944, I took part in the lengthening of the railroad tracks which went from the unloading platform of prisoners at Auschwitz to the interior of the camp at Birkenau. In this way the large transports which came at that time from Hungary arrived in front of the gas chambers and crematorium. My life improved a bit when I was sent to the munitions factory at Union Werke. Then there was the death march of January 18, 1945, which led to the Ravensbrück Camp.

I was liberated, a sick person, May 2 1945 and returned to Biarritz in June of 1945. On returning I found my grandmother very gravely ill. The two of us were in a sad state and without money. My grandfather had died the day of the liberation of Biarritz in August 1944

Raphael ESRAIL, whom I had found again in the summer of 1945, became my husband in January 1948. Our daughter Evelyne was born the same year. We have two grandchildren who are our joy.

We have gone on with our joint life. But our past is always present and haunts me.

---

### **Des dossiers du Mémorial de la Shoah-Paris**

Liliane ESRAIL

née le 9/06/1924 à BIARRITZ de René BADOUD et Armande Rosalie JAFFE

née BADOUD

Déportée par convoi n° 67 du 3/02/1944 pour AUSCHWITZ, rescapée

Marquée dès mon enfance par la perte de mon père gazé dans les tranchées, mort à 40 ans, ma mère disparue pendant la guerre d'Espagne. Mes frères et moi sommes recueillis par notre grand-père Henri JAFFE. Mon père catholique nous fait baptiser. Je fréquente l'institution religieuse à OLORON STE MARIE. L'hôtel de mon grand-père est en 1941 aryanié, administré par un commissaire gérant. Le 10/01/1944 une grande rafle. Mes grands-parents étant gravement malades, nous sommes désignés à leur place. 10 jours à la prison de BAYONNE, puis DRANCY où j'ai rencontré mon futur mari Raphaël ESRAIL qui a aidé mes 2 jeunes frères. Puis AUSCHWITZ, mes 2 frères sont immédiatement gazés à leur arrivée. Sur 1214 personnes formant le convoi, seules 66 femmes et 166 hommes sont sélectionnés. J'ai participé au

prolongement de la voie de chemin de fer du quai de débarquement d'AUSCHWITZ jusqu'au camp de BIRKENAU. Ma vie s'est améliorée lorsque je fus affectée à l'usine de munitions UNION WERCKE. Puis marche de la mort, le 18/01/1945 pour RAVENSBRUK. Malade, je suis libérée le 2/05/1945 et retrouve BIARRITZ en Juin 1945.