

## **Marcel Stourdzé**

Rabbi Marcel Stourdzé was born in 1913 at Boulogne-Sur-Seine and lived with his family including his father who was a rabbi, his mother, two brothers and two sisters. He does not speak much about his life before the war but rather focuses on his experiences during the Holocaust.

Marcel was arrested in August 1943 in Lyon by Klaus Barbie for being both a Jew and a member of the Resistance. He was taken to the transit camp at Drancy. His brother was taken to Merignac in January 1943 and deported in June. Drancy was the transit camp for the Jews, who did not know where they were being sent. Men, women, and children were crowded into waiting railway cars for the three-day journey to Poland. Upon their arrival at Auschwitz, the prisoners were segregated; the men able to work were sent to one side. Most of the others including women, children, and older men were gassed immediately. Those remaining were stripped and had their bodies shaved. Then they were given a number and tattooed. Ten painful needle holes were required for each of the six digits on Marcel's left arm. Often the bleeding holes in the skin got infected and that meant death he explained.

Marcel remained in Auschwitz enduring degradation, hunger, cold and hard labor. In January 1945 the prisoners from his cellblock were evacuated and forced on the infamous Death March. When after six days, they finally arrived in Germany, about 2,500 men were left of the original 12,500.

Marcel was liberated by the United States Army led by General Patton. He returned to Paris and learned that his family including his wife had been deported and killed. Marcel provided powerful testimony at the 1987 trial of Klaus Barbie, the Butcher of Lyon, and again, in 1998, that of Maurice Papon. "Try to imagine, try to imagine" he repeated describing the dehumanizing conditions he experienced. "After the Liberation, I returned to Auschwitz. In a tank there was still hair. I had the impression that I saw my wife's hair. Today, all the hair is white. But at that time, it was the color of those we loved."

Marcel eventually remarried and had a son. Now a widower, he lives in Paris. He has traveled widely and served as President of the National Independent Association of Former Jewish Interned Deportees and Their Families.

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### **From a newspaper account:**

RABBI STOURDZÉ'S TESTIMONY at the trial of Papon

The rabbi's testimony closes five months of court hearings. An ultimate statement and a last testimony of deportee, sounding "crescendo", an addition to the memories of all those who have already testified before this court. White beard, dark suit, Marcel Stourdzé, 85 years of

age, president of the "National Independent Association of Former Jewish Interned Deportees and Their Families", rests his two canes against the railing. He prefers to be standing. Life boils in Marcel Stourdzé when remembering that, because he was a Jew, men wanted to take this same life away from him. He delivers his message just like he did eleven years ago, at the trial of Klaus Barbie. "We, we knew since the "Kristallnacht" in Germany. One of my friends, who operated a pipe factory in Saint-Claude, had a radio with a long antenna. And we heard about it... But in Drancy, we could not tell them, "You will be sent to a camp where you will be slaughtered".

Then, he described the two buildings where the militia gathered those to be deported. His hands became agitated. "They were perhaps a thousand, men, children, women, old people. They were given a piece of bread and sausage. Buses took them to the railway station at Bobigny, where freight trains were waiting. One could read on the cars, "Forty men, eight horses". People were crowded together in the cars, seventy to eighty in each, with one or two sanitary buckets."

And suddenly sentences, scenes, lives from the old-time spring up in the present. "The train leaves. Three days, three nights. To urinate into the bucket, the women cover themselves with a blanket, men turn their heads. We cross Germany. It is cold, it snows. We come to a station. The doors are opened. Outside on the platform are SS, with their dogs. Children are scared. At the end of the platform, we are separated. Men between ages of 16 and 45, to one side, women, children and old people to the other. It is very cold, perhaps 5° below 0. We are at the camp of Auschwitz III."

In the same breath he tells "They strip us naked. A deportee comes. He shaves us under the arms, chest, pubic area". Marcel Stourdzé fixes the court and jury. "Can you imagine, Ladies, this sponge on your body, your breasts, between your legs?" He proceeds. "Afterwards, you take a hot shower. They give you some type of pajama and heavy clogs. You are pushed in rows, following alphabetical order, then they note your occupation. You receive a number. A deportee begins to tattoo you with a pen like needle, pricking through the holes of a stencil. Marcel Stourdzé unfastens and lifts his left sleeve: "If you like, I can come closer to you, Mr. President.....Often, the bleeding holes in your skin got infected. That meant death."

"Try to imagine", repeats tirelessly the deportee's voice. The absurdity to get up and down from your upper cot, under duress, fifty times or more, until you are exhausted to death. "Try to imagine". Degradation, hunger, cold, hard labor - and a bowl of soup for four. We are obliged to lap it up. We are dehumanized. We are animals. "Try to imagine". "All those who left from Merignac and became nothing." Then, he describes the spiral to hell. In January 1945, all the fifty-two blocks, 12.500 internees from his camp, are evacuated. "We find ourselves on the road, in the snow. And one walks, evening, night. And when your neighbor falls, an SS puts a bullet in his head. After three days, we have nothing left to eat. We meet a train in the middle of nowhere, get into the freight cars, and it rolls slowly. We are squeezed one against the other, hundred, a hundred and twenty in one car. When somebody dies, the others throw him out, but before, because it is so cold, we remove his pajama. After three days, the SS forbid it. Then,

we pile up the dead at the end of the freight car, one on top of the other, face down. After a six-day journey, we are around two thousand five hundred left, from twelve thousand at the beginning. We had the view of the chimneys. As soon as there was the slightest breeze, one got the scent of burning bodies. From these ashes, Marcel Stourdzé reminds us Germans made manure. And they kept the hair of the women to make pillows for the German air force

. "Three years after the Liberation, I returned. In a large tank, still, there was the hair. I had the impression that I saw my wife's hair. Today, all that hair is white. But at this time, it had the color of those one loved."

The conclusion of his testimony: "All those who are directly or indirectly responsible for these crimes have to be indicted. At the trial of Klaus Barbie, a juror asked me if I was able to forgive. I answered that only those who did not return are able to forgive. Our obligation is to fight, for this thing will never happen again."

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### Marcel Stourdzé

Arrêté en 1943 par Klaus Barbie, " le Boucher de Lyon " comme étant à la fois juif et membre de la résistance, Marcel Stoudzé survécut à Auschwitz et à la Marche de la Mort.

« Trois ans après la libération, je suis retourné à Auschwitz. Dans un grand tank de collection il y avait encore des cheveux. J'ai eu l'impression de voir les cheveux de ma femme. Aujourd'hui tous les cheveux sont blancs. Mais à ce moment-là, c'était la couleur de ceux que j'aimais ».

Le rabbin Marcel Stourdzé est né en 1913 à Boulogne-sur-Mer et habitait avec sa famille y compris son père qui était rabbin, sa mère, ses deux frères et ses deux sœurs. Il ne parle pas beaucoup de sa vie avant la guerre mais se concentre plutôt sur ses expériences pendant l'Holocauste.

Marcel est arrêté en août 1943 à Lyon et emmené dans le camp de transit à Drancy. Environ 1000 hommes, femmes et enfants étaient entassés dans des wagons en attente pour le voyage de trois jours en Pologne. À leur arrivée à Auschwitz, les prisonniers étaient séparés et les hommes capables de travailler étaient envoyés d'un côté. La plupart des autres y compris les femmes, les enfants et les hommes plus âgés allaient à la chambre à gaz immédiatement. On déshabillait ceux qui restaient et on leur rasait le corps. Ensuite on leur donnait un numéro qu'on tatouait. Il a fallu 10 trous d'aiguilles douloureux pour chacun des six chiffres sur le bras gauche de Marcel. Souvent les trous qui saignaient sur la peau s'infectaient et " cela signifiait la mort " expliqua-t-il.

Marcel est resté à Auschwitz endurant dégradation, faim, froid et dur labeur. En janvier 1945 les prisonniers de sa cellule furent évacués et forcés dans l'abominable Marche de la Mort.

Quand après six jours, ils arrivèrent finalement en Allemagne il restait 2500 hommes sur les 12 500 à l'origine.

Marcel fut libéré par l'armée des États-Unis dirigée par le général Patton. Il retourna à Paris et apprit que sa famille, dont sa femme, avait été déportée et tuée. Marcel a fourni un témoignage puissant au procès de Klaus Barbi le " boucher de Lyon " en 1987 et à nouveau en 1998 pour celui de Maurice Papon. " Essayez d'imaginer, essayez d'imaginer " répéta-t-il pour décrire les conditions déshumanisantes qu'il endura. Marcel pense qu'il se doit de témoigner pour que cela n'arrive plus jamais.

Éventuellement Marcel s'est remarié et a eu un fils. Maintenant devenu veuf il habite à Paris. Il a voyagé et servi en tant que Président de l'Association Nationale Indépendante des Anciens Déportés Juifs Internés et Leurs Familles.

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

Marcel STOURDZE né le 09/07/1913 à BOULOGNE SUR SEINE de Haïm et Binah PERLMUTER

Déporté par le convoi n°60 du 07/10/1943 pour AUSCHWITZ, rescapé

Résistant

Je suis arrêté à LYON en Août 1943 par Klaus BARBIE en tant que Juif et résistant. Torturé à la prison de Fort Montluc et déporté à AUSCHWITZ-MONOWITZ. La Marche de la Mort me conduira à ORANIENBURG, FLOSSENBURG, REGENSBURG et DACHAU où je suis libéré le 29/04/1945 par l'armée PATTON et rapatrié à PARIS le 03/06/1945.

Ma première femme, Dany, a été arrêtée avec moi, déportée et assassinée à AUSCHWITZ.