

Rosette Vloday

Wartime Experience: Concentration Camp Survivor

I was born on May 13, 1925, in the 4th arrondissement in Paris. My parents immigrated from Russia in the 1920's. My father worked as a leather bag maker and my mother as a seamstress. I attended the local elementary school located rue Hospitalière-Saint-Gervais, not far from rue des Rosiers. The school principal Mr. Joseph Migneret was truly a "Righteous Gentile". There were so many Jewish children attending that school that the school was closed on Shabbat, which was most unusual as French elementary schools had classes on Saturday mornings.

I lived in the 4th arrondissement, 14 , rue des Ecouffles with my mother and my sister Jeanette who was 5 years older than I was. My father had died in 1933 when I was eight years old. This section of the 4th arrondissement was like a small and peaceful shtetl in the heart of Paris until the war broke out and France was invaded and occupied by the German forces. Then came the anti-Jewish, racist laws of the Vichy government which eventually resulted in the rounding up of the Jews and their deportation to the death camps.

Until June 8, 1944 , the day my mother and I were arrested, previously we had managed to escape the French police by hiding here and there. On that fateful day, we were driven to Drancy and deported on June 30, 1944, with the convoy number 76, According to Serge Klarsfeld, in that convoy there were 600 men, 550 women and 162 children younger than 18 years.

The train convoy that took us to Birkenau was a nightmare. During five days we endured thirst, horrible overcrowding and smells which asphyxiated us. All of us were exhausted. Some of us collapsed and some became almost insane. When we arrived at Birkenau, 398 men and 223 women were allowed to enter the camp and I was one of them. The other members of the convoy were gassed on arrival . My mother was forty-nine years old. We were separated when we arrived, and I never saw her again.

In Birkenau I was assigned to a kommando chopping wood in the forests. It was very hard work. I stayed in Birkenau until November 1944, and I don't know how I managed to survive. Then I was transferred to Ravensbruck where I caught typhus. I was hospitalized and I was lucky enough to recover. Later on, I was transferred to the Malchow camp and was sent to a factory manufacturing explosive fuses.

Then the time came when the Russian troops were advancing. On May 3, 1945, we were marched out of the camp. With five other friends, who were able to run away and hide in a farm. During the night, when we thought we were safe, Mongolian troops, which were part of the Russian army, entered the farm and sexually assaulted some of my friends. I managed to hide in the barn and escaped their aggression. After this horrifying experience, when we almost lost our lives once again, we managed to join some French resistants and then finally the American army. It was on May 13, 1945, and we were at last free. On May 22, I was repatriated

to Paris where I found my sister who had escaped deportation. She had married a catholic and did not register herself as a Jew with the French authorities. During the war she did not wear a star and remained in Paris.

Eventually life began again. I started a family. I was grateful to have a daughter who gave me two grandchildren, a boy and a girl. When I returned from deportation, I worked in the fur industry. Subsequently I became a social worker for deportee organizations .My sister died in 1989.

Today I am enjoying my well-deserved retirement years.

Des dossiers du Mémorial de la Shoah–Paris

Rosette VLODAVER

Rosette VLODAVER née le 13/05/1925 à PARIS 4ème de parents ayant quitté la RUSSIE dans les années 1920 pour la France.

Déportée à BIRKENAU par le convoi n° 76 du 30/06/1944, rescapée

Père maroquinier, mère couturière. Vie agréable dans le quartier du Marais, au 14 rue des Ecouffles. Scolarité à l'école communale de la rue des Hospitalières-Saint-Gervais, dirigée par un juste Mr Joseph MIGNERET. Mon père était décédé en 1933. Le 8/6/1944 ma mère et moi sommes arrêtées. Conduites à DRANCY, nous sommes déportées le 30/06/1944, destination BIRKENAU (POLOGNE). Le convoi est composé de 600 hommes, 550 femmes et 162 enfants de moins de 18 ans. Le voyage dure 5 jours, cinq jours d'enfer. A notre arrivée au camp, sélection: 398 hommes et 223 femmes resteront au camp, le reste du convoi est immédiatement gazé. Je ne reverrai plus ma mère âgée de 49 ans. En novembre je suis transférée à RAVENSBRUCK où j'attrape le typhus. Soignée, je suis transférée au camp de MALCHOW, affectée dans une usine d'explosifs. Le 3/05/1945 les Allemands nous obligent à évacuer le camp à l'approche des troupes soviétiques. Avec quelques autres déportées nous nous cachons dans une ferme, mais des Mongols appartenant à l'armée soviétique, violent quelques déportées. Le 13/05/1945 nous sommes enfin libres délivrées par l'armée américaine.