

# A city so fiery... The Jews of Liège at the Liberation

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**W**hen the Second World War broke out, Liège-Ville counted around 1,900 Jews among its 161,073 inhabitants, with the Liège region as a whole having 2,560 Jews within a total population of 410,232, representing 0.6% of the total population. Of these Jews, 8.56% were Belgian and 60.18% Polish; the rest were mainly from Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Hungary and Germany, and were often now officially stateless. The final death toll from the 'Final Solution' in the Liège region was around 733, including almost 96 children under the age of 15. Among them, 35 Jews of Belgian nationality were deported.<sup>1</sup>

## LIBERATION: FROM EUPHORIA TO CHAOS

7 September 1944 marked a critical juncture in the history of Liège, with the official organ of the Liège Federation of the Front de l'Indépendance enthusiastically announcing: "*Liège l'insoumise est libérée!*"

— Liège, 7-8 September 1944. The indomitable spirit of the people of Liège knows no limits... Even before the arrival of the American troops on the right bank of the city, scheduled for the 8th September, which meant that the German withdrawal would begin, engulfing the inhabitants of Liège the streets of the Fiery City, in an early burst of liberation and joy



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This date marked the long-awaited liberation of the rebel city. The forces of the 3<sup>rd</sup> American armoured division, under the command of General Rose, distinguished themselves in liberating the left bank of Liège. However, the resolute spirit of the people of Liège knew no delay: on the eve of the arrival of the American troops on the city's right bank, on the day the German troops left, the people of Liège poured into the streets of the Cité ardente. The surge of joy and euphoria manifested itself in spontaneous demonstrations.

The Socialist Mayor, Joseph Bologne<sup>2</sup>, who had been dismissed from his post on 1 November 1942 for “administrative obstruction”, was welcomed back to the Town Hall to great acclaim. And the former aldermen's college, which had been ousted when “Grand-Liège” was created in November 1942<sup>3</sup> in favour of persons<sup>4</sup> more conciliatory with the occupying authority, was reinstated<sup>5</sup>, symbolising the re-establishment of municipal authority in the post-liberation context.

At the same time, the members of the Belgian government in exile in London returned to Brussels, and three weeks later Hubert Pierlot<sup>6</sup> succeeded in forming a new “national union” government. In line with the pattern observed at the national level in Belgium, the liberation was characterised by the restoration of political institutions as they had existed before the war.

On 9 September, Mayor Bologna returned to his duties and, as chairman of the Conference of Mayors<sup>7</sup> of Greater Liège, informed the population of the disarmament directives issued by the American authorities<sup>8</sup>. The question of disarming the Resistance was a major concern for the municipal authorities. This concern was shared by the Allies, for whom Belgium represented an essential operational base for their advance towards Germany, and who sought to avoid at all costs any excesses, particularly by the Communists.<sup>9</sup>

The forces responsible for maintaining law and order at this moment were practically non-existent and were inadequately equipped to deal with the many armed groups that could seize or arrest employees and even execute them without a warrant. These armed groups exercised or imposed their authority in industrial centres, underlining the complexity of the security situation facing the population. However, to avoid exacerbating tensions with the Resistance, the Governor of the province, Joseph Leclercq, in agreement with the American authorities, authorised members of the four resistance groups (the Belgian Army, the Liberation Army, the Independence Front and the Belgian National Movement) to carry arms.<sup>10</sup>

For almost two years after the Liberation, food supplies were a problem and a large part of the population continued to live in precarious conditions. Economic recovery, although underway, was still in its initial stage. This stagnation was reflected in a marked increase in the number of unemployed. Strikes, which continued almost uninterrupted throughout September and October, severely affected the industrial area of Liège.

These social movements had a significant impact on coal and steel production, causing disruptions in the distribution of goods, sporadic power cuts and inconveniences to rail and road transport. The shortages also gave rise to a thriving black market, which flourished until 1946.

The demands of these social movements, fuelled by an emerging radical trade-union movement, focused on a range of issues. These included demands for higher wages, concerns about the notorious shortage of food supplies and the shortage of fuel, and a desire to punish business leaders suspected of collaboration.

While various coalition governments had failed to stabilise the country, these social tensions were gradually pushing the industrial areas of the south to the edge of a pre-revolutionary situation, revealing a deep mistrust for the existent economic and political structures.

In October 1944, a new twist in local politics in Liège added to a climate already fraught with mistrust of political figures. Mayor Joseph Bologne and Lambert Destexhe, the public prosecutor at the Liège Court of Appeal, were attacked in the newspaper *Le Monde du travail*. They were accused of having exposed around 180 members of the Communist Party to enemy searches in May 1941, and of having passed on a list of “pimps” containing around 30 names in September<sup>11</sup>. The Liège Federation of the Socialist Party was concerned about the possible repercussions of these compromising allegations about the burgomaster and decided to exclude Mayor Bologne. Shortly afterwards, in February 1945, he resigned as mayor and was immediately replaced by the Socialist lawyer Paul Gruselin.

A few months later, the Royal Question – concerning the controversial return of King Leopold III and the accusations of collaboration against him – shook Belgium, causing deep divisions within the country and marking a period of intense tension and debate. This latest political crisis would only come to an end five years later, on 16 July 1951, when Leopold III abdicated in favour of his son Baudouin.

Despite appearances, the war was not over. On 11 September, the last Jew in Liège was murdered. Léo Michelson was riding a motorbike with a friend near Jusleville (12 kilometres from Liège) when they were intercepted by German soldiers. Without trial or delay, Michelson was shot on the spot, while his friend managed to escape.<sup>12</sup>

For several months, Liège remained dangerously close to the theatre of military operations. The von Rundstedt offensive in the Ardennes in the winter of 1944-1945 even raised fears of the return of the occupying forces. Among the objectives of this battle was the capture of Antwerp and Liège, which was a crucial strategic point for the American army in terms of transporting supplies.

The Germans then launched a massive V1 and V2 bombing campaign against Liège. Although the military effects were not particularly decisive, the consequences for civilians were dramatic, as historian Bernard Wilkin notes: “Around 1,680 V1s and V2s hit the city, causing the loss of 1,269 people from Liège and more than 2,000

wounded. A particularly striking figure was that 78,000 houses were damaged or totally destroyed.” The V1 and V2 attacks ceased at the end of January 1945.<sup>13</sup>

### FROM RELIEF TO RECONSTRUCTION

#### *Between ruins and hopes*

In the first days after liberation, the Jews of the Liège region shared with their fellow citizens a sense of relief and joy. But where exactly were they? Since the round-up on 24 September 1942, no Jew in the region had been living at his or her legal address<sup>14</sup>. The return of the Jews to Liège occurred against a backdrop of general chaos, and eyewitness accounts reveal a wide variety of situations.

This process took place in several distinct waves. First, the majority of the survivors, who had been scattered mainly in the Liège region and the Ardennes, began to return. They were then joined by those who had found refuge abroad, in countries such as France, Switzerland, Morocco and Denmark.

This return movement was followed by the repatriation of the few survivors of the camps. The arrival of the refugees, who hoped to be reunited with their loved ones, to return home or to find refuge, marked the last phase of this process.

#### *Material challenges, spoliation and administrative obstacles*

The return of the survivors came up against concrete material issues, such as the conditions for reinstatement of one’s previous legal domicile, which was often now completely emptied. At the same time as the deportations, the Germans had begun the *Möbelaktion*, an operation that involved emptying the residences that the Jews had been forced to abandon. All movable property was to be confiscated. Launched in Liège on 23 October 1942 and ending on 12 August 1944 (one month after the last roundup), this operation was intended to later redistribute the stolen goods to Germans of the Reich whose towns had been devastated by Allied bombing raids.

In Liège, more than 257 houses and flats were emptied of their contents by local removal firms, which transferred the goods to premises requisitioned by the occupying forces before sending them by ship to Germany. A total of five ships left Liège as part of the *Möbelaktion*, the last of which was the “*Rijnbinnevaart*”, which left the port of Coronmeuse four days before the Liberation. Thanks to Joachim Frenkiel, a Jewish engineer and assistant at the University of Liège who had recently emerged from hiding with his family, the boat was found a week later on the bridge at Wandre, carrying thirty tonnes of furniture bound for Berlin. The recovered furniture was then returned to school premises, in particular to the school on rue Bonne-Nouvelle and to the library on place de la Vieille Montagne, where it had been removed a few weeks earlier.<sup>15</sup>

On his return from hiding in November 1944, Osias Kallus sent a registered letter to the Colleges of Mayors and Aldermen of the City of Liège, describing the spoliation of his property by the German army because he was a Jew. He described

the situation in which he and his wife now found themselves, having returned to their home to find only bare walls, the result of the looting of their house and fur shop. He indicated that he had been informed that part of his furniture, in this case his bedroom, was in the rue Bonne Nouvelle at the local school: “I went to this address to repossess this part of my property and I had the unpleasant surprise of being asked to pay two thousand eight hundred francs for recovery costs”.<sup>16</sup> The matter was brought to the attention of the Alderman for Public Education, Auguste Buisseret, who in turn called on the Alderman for Finance, Mr Depresseux, to find a solution. At the same time, stories like that of the Messerschmidt-Sirot family, who like so many others faced a never-ending series of bureaucratic obstacles, highlight the challenges of integration faced by survivors and reveal the struggle of many refugees to regain a sense of normality and dignity in a world that had irrevocably changed.

Walter Messerschmidt, who was German, and his wife, Léa Sternlieb, moved to Belgium in 1938 and married in 1939 in Antwerp, where their daughter, Yvonne, was born.

In 1941, the family moved to Liège and, faced with the growing threat, fled to Switzerland in 1942. After Walter’s tragic death in 1944 in a coal-mining accident at “Kanderkühle SA” in Kandergrund, where he was working as a specialist, Léa and Yvonne returned to Brussels in 1945, supported by a small annuity from Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre (AIVG). In 1947, Léa married Walter Sirot, an Austrian Jew. Their dealings with the authorities to secure their stay in Belgium came up against an overwhelming bureaucracy and its implacable logic. Despite the support of various organisations, the relentless administrative hurdles undermined their resilience. When Walter Sirot received a deportation notice in 1948, the couple decided to leave for Vienna, in the hope of making a fresh start.<sup>17</sup>

### *Legal and social challenges*

For the 48 people from Liège who survived deportation, the return to the Burning City was full of pitfalls. They had to seek help for a wide range of problems related to their physical and mental states. However, the legal provisions concerning compensation for victims of war did not apply to Jewish and Roma victims. In Belgium, no law took into account persecution on racial grounds, and the existing legislation on war victims was based on the concept of national solidarity. The benefits provided by this legislation were reserved exclusively for nationals. This

– Liège, 11 November 1944. Bernard Prynck, surrounded by his rescuers. After his escape from the 16th Convoy, on 31 October 1942, David Prynck finds his wife and their son back. The couple finds shelter with friends, while their son Bernard hides for several months, first in the sanatorium in Auderghem, then with two families from the Liège region (the Davister in Liège and the Liégeois in Battice)



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had consequences for the Jewish community in Liège, where only just over 8% of its members met the nationality criteria required by the laws in force. As a result, only a small minority of deported Jews were able to obtain the status of political prisoner, which afforded them the right to a pension. These were mainly people who had received the legal status of being officially Belgian, or whose spouse or descendant had Belgian nationality, or people who had distinguished themselves through patriotic activity in Belgium<sup>18</sup>.

### *Special cases of survivors or the challenges of assistance*

Léon Raszkin, deported in September 1942 with his father, Benjamin, and brothers Joseph and Maurice, faced similar circumstances. He and his father were repatriated in May 1945. Although Léon Raszkin acquired Belgian nationality in October 1945, he was not entitled to political-prisoner status. His father was excluded because he was a Polish national at the time of his application. It was not until he obtained Belgian nationality, in 1956, that he became a beneficiary of the status.<sup>19</sup>

Ludwig Zurek and his wife, Anna Bella Helmann, were deported in January 1943. Anna died in Auschwitz. Ludwig Zurek's striking story evidences the horrors of deportation: he underwent medical experiments at Auschwitz, was assigned to the *Sonderkommando*, survived and was then put to work in an armaments factory. In January 1944, he escaped from a train bound for Germany. His final journey then began, taking him from Germany to Belgium via Kiev, Moscow, Odessa, Constantinople, Port Said and finally Marseille. He was repatriated at the beginning of June 1945, but was denied political-prisoner status on the grounds that he was a Polish national and had been racially deported.<sup>20</sup>

To survive, some were forced to build a personal “legend”. Fradla Goldberg, a foreigner who was illiterate, was alone in Belgium with two dependent children, and faced considerable challenges.

A sympathetic neighbour who was a member of the Resistance offered to fabricate an account for her, according to which her husband, Mojzesk Ringelheim, deported on convoy XVI, had been an active member of his Resistance group, the Liberation Army.<sup>21</sup>

With the help of this neighbour, Fradla constructed a “mythical” story of a Resistance fighter husband which gave her access to financial aid. Despite this stratagem being discovered later, she was able to keep the benefits she had obtained. This ordeal, a mixture of adversity and solidarity, left a lasting impression on her son Foulek, who went on to become an eminent magistrate and distinguished figure in the literary world.

### *Leadership and organisation*

Faced with the immense task of reconstruction, questions soon arose as to who had the skills and legitimacy to bring this process to a successful conclusion.



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– Liège, the Léon Fredericq street, autumn 1944. Captured German soldiers guarded by American GI's, assist in the return of coal to the synagogue of Liège

Was it community institutions, such as the pre-war Jewish community that had dissolved in November 1941<sup>22</sup>? Its last president, Chaïm Peguine, had been deported with his wife and two of his children. They did not return.<sup>23</sup>

Was it the local committee of the Association of Jews in Belgium, set up at the end of December 1941<sup>24</sup>? Its president, Noé Nozyce, had been deported with his wife and two children. He was repatriated alone<sup>25</sup> in May 1945 and de facto deprived of any activity within Jewish institutions.<sup>26</sup>

Was it the representatives of religious Judaism? The officiating minister Iosif Lepkifker was taken into the care of the Bishop of Liège, Mgr Kerkhofs, and hidden for two years, apart from his family, in the Catholic institutions of the region. This period of hardship, highlighted by deportation and the tragic loss of Lepkifker's parents, was decisive for him. After the Liberation, he became fully involved in his religious responsibilities as an officiating minister, at the same time devoting himself to the Committee for the Defence of Jews (CDJ)<sup>27</sup>.

It was in this difficult context that Albert Wolf emerged as a providential leader. From the 1930s onwards, as a Communist activist, he had been involved in the Bel-

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gian League against Racism and Antisemitism (LBCRA). He was taken prisoner in 1940, during the Eighteen Days campaign, but managed to escape from the convoy taking him to Germany. He was also founder and leading member of the underground organisation Solidarité, affiliated to the Front de l'Indépendance during the war. Forced underground in June 1941 to escape an anti-Communist operation launched by the German police during the attack on the USSR, he played a leading role in the Front de l'Indépendance (FI) until the Liberation. Without ceasing to act for the Front de l'Indépendance, he became president of the Liège section, provincial leader and member of the national committee of the CDJ<sup>28</sup>, while continuing his work as a printer, producing clandestine newspapers and false papers.

His ability to adapt even in the most perilous circumstances, to mobilise resources and to inspire those around him made Albert Wolf an undisputed leader. His career, marked by deep commitment and significant achievements, demonstrates not only his organisational skills and charisma as a leader, but also his strategic vision. He thus became an essential figure in guiding the Jewish community of Liège in its efforts to rebuild at a time when traditional leadership was lacking.

For its part, the Belgian government put in place substantial resources to ensure the repatriation of the 300,000 Belgians held in Germany, most of whom were prisoners of war, forced labourers or deportees.<sup>29</sup>

In Liège in September 1944, the issue of repatriating civilian and military deportees was raised at a major meeting held at the Palais Provincial and chaired by the provincial governor. It was at this meeting that the authorities decided to create a Provincial Office for Repatriation, and to set up a committee comprising, among others, district commissioners, the provincial health inspector, delegates from the city of Liège, as well as representatives from Assistance publique, the Red Cross and Œuvre nationale de l'Enfance. A decision was also made to establish reception centres in 11 towns in the region. Notably, however, no Jewish representatives were included in this committee.<sup>30</sup>

Jewish survivors of the death camps were only a minority of the total number of people returning to Belgium. These survivors needed emergency assistance, but for the Belgian authorities, their fate was not a priority: they were just one problem among many, and no specific measures were taken in their regard. Nor was any programme implemented to help the victims of Nazi racial policy. The old and new leaders of the community soon realised that they could not expect any help or support from the government, which was busy managing the political and social chaos.

### *The efforts of the AIVG and reintegration*

In the face of the unprecedented persecution suffered by the Jewish population, which had left behind a shattered community, it became imperative to create dedicated communal structures. Rather than being a simple reaction to the lack of



governmental assistance, this initiative reflects a deeply rooted culture of mutual aid within Jewish communities.

At the beginning of October 1944, in Brussels, members of the Comité de Défense des Juifs founded Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre (AIVG). This organisation undertook to “come to the aid of Jewish victims of the war, in particular those who had been deported or stripped of their property, and to ensure their reintegration into economic and social life”.<sup>31</sup>

Substantial funding from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish relief organization based in New York City, enabled the AIVG to set up the necessary support structures.<sup>32</sup>

In Liège, Albert Wolf could rely on some of the group that had formed during the war: Janchel Barbalat, Abraham Federman and Josek Pantiel, joined by Samuel Litwak, the officiating minister Iosif Lepkifker and three non-Jews: R. Philippe, Masson and Ovadis.

Idel Steinberg is missing here: he had been deported with his family on convoy XXII, on 20 September 1943. They did not return<sup>33</sup>. Janchel Pailloucq had died in December 1942. His two children (Isabelle, aged thirteen, and Jean-Joseph, aged seven) were killed in a bombing raid and his wife, Liuba Iochpa (Hertz Iochpa's sister),<sup>34</sup> who was also a member of the CDJ, had left Liège for Brussels during the war, to maintain the link between the two cities.<sup>35</sup>

### *Work plan and committees*

A work plan was immediately published which addressed the many challenges facing the Jews. These included meeting the primary needs of Jewish victims, reinstating their rights, property and work, obtaining war damages for losses suffered, returning stolen property to its rightful owners, and undertaking various administrative procedures such as renewing identity documents, identifying abandoned children, drawing up certificates for refugees, and facilitating repatriation procedures, visas, transport, research into the missing and the mass naturalisation of foreign Jews. Seven thematic committees were set up within the AIVG for this purpose: assistance committee, legal committee and war-damage committee, purge committee, civil-status committee, children's committee, food and stocks committee and representative committee. The conclusion of the plan was unequivocal: “Everything has to be solved, it's a big task. We made enormous efforts under the Nazi occupation. We must now move forward and achieve the various objectives we have set ourselves.”<sup>36</sup>

An important part of the plan concerned the return of children to conditions conducive to their education and freedom. For children whose parents were unable to take them back due to insufficient means, the CDJ would continue to pay the landlords as before. For the others, who had been placed with private individuals, the principle was to ask the adoptive parents to keep the children until they could

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be returned to their families, i.e. six months after the end of hostilities. An investigation would be carried out into the moral environment and lifestyle of each child before they were integrated into the programme. The same principle applied to those who had been placed in liberal or religious institutions. The Children's Commission would work closely with official and private organisations to ensure that these children would receive all necessary help. In addition, although the work plan did not explicitly mention the elderly, their specific needs and issues were taken into consideration within the broader framework of the mission<sup>37</sup>.

At meetings of the AIVG's Board of Directors held in Brussels, the defence of Liège's interests was entrusted in turn to Albert Wolf and Abraham Federman<sup>38</sup>. A moving example of this representation occurred at the meeting of 14 August 1945, when Federman raised the issue of the inadequacy of the budget allocated for Liège. He referred specifically to the situation of women who were without support, whose husbands had been deported, stressing the inadequacy of the amount allocated to them.<sup>39</sup>

\_ Visé, 1945. Rosa Fuchs and her father, Moses Fuchs, pose amid newly repatriated deportees and two American soldiers. They are located in the quarantine station of Visé, where the deportees have been subjected to a medical examination, in order to obtain information about Salomon and Arnold, Rosa's brothers, who were deported on 4 August 1942 with the first convoy. The two brothers would not return



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### *Rescuing and reintegrating children*

The CDJ rightly claimed to have played a major role in the rescue of children during the war. 81% of Jewish children in the Liège region escaped deportation<sup>40</sup>, and a large but difficult to estimate number of them were taken into care by the CDJ. The Children's Commission undoubtedly occupied a special place in the minds of the people in charge of the AIVG. In drawing up its plan, the Children's Commission

paid particular attention to restoring children to appropriate material and moral conditions. As the scale of the disaster became ever more apparent (for example, with the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January 1945), and as it became clear that many parents would not return from the deportation, a series of questions arose about the fate of their children.

There was an urgent need to locate children in hiding, either through Resistance networks or through the actions of their parents. This process was of crucial importance in rebuilding the children's identity, particularly their Jewish identity. The children's future was therefore a key issue and would be the focus of bitter discussions between Zionists and Communists active within the AIVG in Liège and Brussels.

An example of this is the story of Caim Zinger, aged 10 when he escaped the roundup on 24 September 1942; his father, Fiszal, his mother, Bacha Goldstein, sister Sura and uncle Zelig Kalinski were deported on 26 September in the XI<sup>th</sup> convoy. After being taken in by the parents of a friend linked to the Resistance, he was given a new identity, "Joseph Dupont", and sent to the Saint-Hadelin college in Visé. He then had to leave the school to be placed with the Dethier family in Visé-Lierneux. Back at school, he ran away to join the Dethier family, preferring the security and affection of their home, where he stayed until the end of the conflict. After the war, the welcome and support of a couple, the Rubinsteins, gave him stability and warmth that would help in shaping his future.<sup>41</sup>

It should be noted that some of the children were hidden in Catholic institutions in the diocese of Liège, where many clergymen played a central role in the physical rescue of Jews. Such clergymen devoted themselves to the "spiritual rescue of Israel"<sup>42</sup>. This sensitive subject attracted the attention of influential figures, including Pinkus Broder, a Communist activist and administrator of the AIVG, who remarked that "The national head of this department [Childhood] will contact the ecclesiastical authorities to settle amicably all questions concerning children placed in religious institutions".<sup>43</sup> Between November 1944 and December 1945<sup>44</sup>, these children were removed from the various institutions (most of them religious) in which they had been placed. But this was far from being settled "amicably".<sup>45</sup>

Tensions between Communists and Zionists were exacerbated by the issue of recovering the children. For some, the future of these orphans lay in Eretz Israel<sup>46</sup>. To this end, the Bahad movement (*Brit Haloutzim Datiyim* - Alliance of Religious Pioneers) and the Jewish Agency for Palestine set up a reception centre for Jewish orphans. This was the Marquain Craft and Agricultural School, located in the province of Hainaut, which prepared young orphans for immigration to Palestine and gave them the opportunity to rediscover their damaged Jewish identity. The initiative was supported by the Palestinian soldiers of the Jewish Brigade, which had been integrated into the British army and stationed in Belgium from July 1945.

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Many of the 270 children who passed through the Marquain farm school (or *hachshara*) came from the Liège region. Frieda Nemeth, orphaned by the deportation of her parents and two brothers, was found in a Catholic home in Banneux by a cousin who belonged to the British Army's Jewish Brigade. She stayed at the Marquain *hachshara* for a year before leaving clandestinely for Palestine in 1947 aboard the Theodore Herzl. Cécile and Renée Goldman, orphans after the war, followed the same path. First placed at the Château des Fawes (Banneux), in the Catholic-school colony for girls known as "La Vierge des Pauvres", run by the Sisters of Charity of Saint-Vincent de Paul, they were transferred towards the end of the war to a family in Liège, where they were baptised, before ending up in Marquain and then emigrating to Palestine.

Some children, like E.P., who had lost her parents and was advised to emigrate, were opposed to the idea. Baptised *at the last minute* in July 1945, she stated: "Catholics saved me twice, the first from the Germans, the second from the Zionists."<sup>47</sup>

### *The beginnings of tension*

One of the objectives of the programme drawn up by the AIVG was "that justice be done", i.e. that those involved in the persecution of Jews be punished. At the Liberation, the Front de l'Indépendance (FI) firmly demanded purges against collaborators<sup>48</sup>. Against this backdrop, Albert Wolf, who was also involved in other responsibilities, actively fought to bring the leaders of the local committee of the Association of Jews in Belgium (AJB) to justice.

This episode began in mid-November 1944, when Grigorijs Garfinkels was arrested, without a warrant, by the Purge Commission of the Liège Jewish Defence Committee. A former chairman of the education committee, treasurer and general secretary of the Liège Local Committee, Garfinkels was subjected to an in-depth interrogation covering various aspects of his activity. Following this interrogation, the CDJ compiled an incriminating file, which it forwarded to the military auditor's office<sup>49</sup>. Two other similar files concerning officials of the local committee of the AJB were also compiled.<sup>50</sup>

However, Albert Wolf did not take action against the Liège administration in connection with the preparation, updating and transmission of the register of Jews to the occupying authority<sup>51</sup>. At that time, the details and scale of the deportation of Jews from the Liège region remained obscure. It took three decades and years of painstaking research to reveal that over 60% of the region's Jews had been apprehended on the basis of this register, as part of compulsory labour, house arrests or roundups, as compared to the 25% who had been apprehended through the tracking down of illegal immigrants by the anti-Jewish section (section IV B) of the *Sicherheitspolizei*.<sup>52</sup>

At the end of October 1944, the officiating minister, Iosif Lepkifker, a member of the Liège Committee of the AIVG, requested information from the Liège city administration about the register of Jews, which would ultimately be handed over to the Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ)<sup>53</sup>.

*Punishing those responsible*

The trial of Bourgmestre Joseph Bologne and Procureur général à la cour d'appel de Liège, Lambert Destexhe, began on 6 November 1945 before the Conseil de Guerre de Charleroi.

The fact that the municipal administration of Liège had, without hesitation, passed on the register of Jews to the occupying forces was not the subject of the trial<sup>54</sup>; nevertheless, this issue was raised at the public hearing on the same day.

– The Bahad movement (*Brit Halutzim Datiyim*), or the Union of Religious Pioneers, in collaboration with the Jewish Agency for Palestine, established a shelter for Jewish orphans. It is known as *The Hachshara* and is located in the craft and agricultural school of Marquain, in the province of Hainaut. The initiative came with the support of soldiers from the Jewish Brigade, a unit of the British army composed of Jewish-Palestinian volunteers and had been stationed in Belgium since July 1945. *The Hachshara* offered Hebrew language lessons and vocational training to prepare the children for migration to Palestine. Among the migration candidates were people from Liège: Cécile and Renée Goldman, Armand-Joseph and Maurice-René Gat, Fella Minski and Frieda Nemeth. For more details on the history of the Liège children, please refer to Nizkor



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When questioned by the president of the court, Bologna declared, with unshakeable firmness: “Yes, I maintain that I refused to hand over the lists of Jews and Freemasons to the Germans, because the law is formal. This was in 1940. I refused, invoking the law. I was not punished in any way.”<sup>55</sup> The testimony of the aldermen, the pillars of his administration, must have thrilled the courtroom. They forcefully evoked the patriotism and resistance of their former mayor, who, when confronted with the Nazi request for a list of Jews, had supposedly been a master of strategic evasion and “*gave a wooden sword*” as a response<sup>56</sup>. The question of the transmission of a list of Jews, having been quickly evaded by Bologna, received no further attention during the trial or in the following years.<sup>57</sup>

Paradoxically, this same burgomaster had shown, in other areas, a firm determination to oppose the instructions and requisitions of the occupying authority, as well as of the general secretaries. Bologna was acquitted and retired with dignity from the political scene, without ever mentioning his administration’s collaboration in the execution of the anti-Jewish orders issued by the German forces. Destexhe was also acquitted in October 1946.

Joseph Bologne’s successor at the Town Hall, Théophile Dargent, a Rexist, was accused of gross denunciations and police collaboration after Bologne had been removed from office on 1 November 1942. He was sentenced to death and executed. The issue of persecution of the Jews was not raised at his trial<sup>58</sup>. It is true that he had little to reproach himself for on this subject, apart from regularly updating the register and occasionally passing it on to the occupying forces until the end of June 1944. His predecessor had already done most of this, and promptly.

The directors of the Office du Travail (OT) were also prosecuted, and their involvement in the forced labour of Jews weighed heavily on the sentences handed down. Albert Carpiaux, director of the OT, was sentenced to life imprisonment. S. Meunier, head of the department, was sentenced to death. François Pirard, head of the “Placement” section, died in September 1944, thereby escaping prosecution.

*SS-Sturmscharführer* Wilhelm Stade, head of the anti-Jewish section in Liège, was renowned for his abuses, which included arbitrary detentions, coercion and assault, murders, beatings and thefts. His case was dismissed on 21 March 1949, the prosecution having been deemed inappropriate<sup>59</sup>. As for his Belgian auxiliaries within the *SIPO*, Alfred Delhez was sentenced to three years in prison, Oscar Èvrard to the death penalty, Maurice Darcis was rehabilitated on 4 September 1978, Auguste Voss was sentenced to 20 years, while Pierre Telgmann, who held German nationality and was regarded as the most implacable “hunter” of Jews, was sentenced to death at the end of June 1947. He was notified of his expulsion in September 1955, and it was probably at the beginning of 1959 that he left Belgium to settle in Aachen, Germany.<sup>60</sup>

In April 1947, the files sent by the Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ) de Liège implicating the leaders of the local committee of the Association des Juifs de Belgique (AJB) were closed. The trial of the AJB therefore did not take place.<sup>61</sup>

### *The Citadel of the Resistance and the birth of the founding myth*

On the first Monday in October 1944, the Municipal Council held its first public inaugural meeting at the Town Hall. On this historic day, Mayor Bologna laid the foundation stone of the post-war founding myth, which gave rise to the symbolic image of “the citadel of resistance”. In his speech, he paid tribute to “the Allies, the Belgians who did their duty, the patriots and the population”. He emphasised the exceptional action of the Resistance in Liège, where it “was the most valiant”.

He gave this memorable speech in the same building where, a few years earlier, he had pledged his full cooperation to the occupying forces in applying measures against the Jews<sup>62</sup>. The contrast between the heights of official discourse and the depths of past collaboration is striking.

However, this representation responded to the need to restore legality and unity, promote reconciliation, ease tensions and rebuild a town that has been severely tested by four years of occupation and recent bombings. As a result, the impact of this work has permanently obscured the grey areas surrounding the actions of the Burgomaster and his administration during the war.

### *Jewish memory erased*

Like other cities, Liège has shown a notable indifference towards the Jews, excluding them from the collective narrative of the Resistance and the victory against Nazism. This omission has helped to minimise in public opinion the reality of the suffering endured by the Jews solely because of their Jewish identity. It also ignores their refusal to bow to the fate that befell them, and in particular their involvement in the military and civilian Resistance against Nazism.

In the immediate post-war period, the regional press took no interest in the Jews. With the liberation of the camps and the revelation of the horrors uncovered by the Allies, the press slowly began to report on these atrocities. However, it concentrated on anecdotal accounts, which highlighted the heroic acts of ordinary people in saving the Jews and thus contributed to the construction of the myth of Jewish passivity. In such telling, the Jews are reduced to marginal figures, rather than citizens of Liège in their own right.

### *Resumption of community activities*

Following the Liberation, religious activities within the community were resumed, in particular under the impetus of Iosif Lepkifker, who had returned to his position as officiating minister.<sup>63</sup>

Besides offering religious services at the synagogue, he accompanied Rabbi Brody of the American army to visit American Jewish soldiers in hospital and participated

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in religious services for those who had died. At the end of March 1945, he organised the first post-war Passover Seder at the Jardin d'Acclimatation for several hundred American soldiers.<sup>64</sup>

It was not until October 1945, a year after the Liberation, that community activities officially resumed under the presidency of Elimelech Fremder<sup>65</sup>. This was a crucial stage in the community's reconstruction of the Burning City. However, the community, with almost non-existent resources, faced major financial challenges and relied mainly on donations from American soldiers, most of whom departed in 1946. As the community's vice-president and treasurer, Joseph Krimtschansky, pointed out, the situation was all the more precarious because the membership base was small, and most members, needing support themselves, were unable to contribute financially.<sup>66</sup>

Reconstruction also involved repairing Jewish cultural heritage, particularly the synagogue. The synagogue on rue de la Boverie and the adjoining *Mikvé* (ritual bath) had been damaged by looting and bombing<sup>67</sup>. Funding also needed to be found for staff and for the hiring of a *Shohet* (for ritual slaughter), in order to meet the needs of community life.

The arrival of refugees, and their care and integration into their new environment, also posed a challenge for the community authorities. Historian Catherine Massange highlights the obvious reluctance of both Belgian society and the authorities to integrate refugees who had no previous ties with the country.

A typical example of the efforts made to assist refugees, and one in which Elimelech Fremder's intervention was decisive, was the case of Maisy Prezerowitsch, a Polish woman living in Luxembourg who had been threatened with deportation while staying with her uncle in Liège. Fremder intervened on her behalf with the Ministry of Justice in Brussels, stressing the temporary nature of her stay and her plans to emigrate to Palestine. Prezerowitsch was allowed to stay in Liège, where she found a husband and started a family.<sup>68</sup>

Jewish charities in Liège did not survive the war. The Jewish school, which counted seventy pupils in 1939, never resumed its activities, nor did the "*Dovor Tov*" society for Jewish history and literature, founded in 1906. However, the Société israélite de Bienfaisance, the flagship institution of Jewish community mutual aid founded in 1882, reopened in 1947, under the aegis of Rafal Janowski. The Société de Bienfaisance, six of whose directors had disappeared<sup>69</sup>, was run by members appointed by the Liège Jewish community, which illustrates the reciprocal links between the various bodies involved in local Jewish life. This particular institution, whose resources came solely from donations, played a critical role in providing material and spiritual support to people in precarious situations<sup>70</sup>.



*When revolt takes hold of the synagogue*

Two years after the Liberation, the extent of the hardships suffered and the situation of the Jews became clearer: they included refugees, survivors of the death camps, hidden children, converts, orphans, widows and widowers, as well as those dispossessed or economically devastated. This post-war context should normally have united the different currents within the community, which ranged from the liberal tradition to ancestral traditions and practices, in a common effort to meet the challenges ahead.

However, far from the harmony and cooperation that might have been expected, tensions soon emerged, highlighting deep divisions within the Jewish community. Joseph Ein, the temporary president of the Jewish community, highlighted the internal conflict with particular acuity<sup>71</sup>. He pointed to the rift between the representatives of majority Orthodox Judaism, who considered Orthodoxy to be the only legitimate form of Judaism, and their co-religionists of less strict observance. In his view, this dichotomy was the source of a growing malaise within the community.

Such growing unease, of course, was hardly new. Between the wars, the composition of Liège's Jewish community had changed drastically with the arrival of Orthodox Jews from the East, exacerbating religious tensions with the less observant Jews already there. The integration efforts of the 1930s failed to establish religious solidarity, creating a persistent division<sup>72</sup>. In 1939, the official Jewish community numbered 200 members, with a dissident group of 70 members, not recognised by the Consistoire Israélite de Belgique, called the "Amicale Israélite". A small place of prayer, or *shtiebel*, was set up near a neighbourhood with a large immigrant Jewish population, effectively symbolising the internal fractures of this community in the throes of change.<sup>73</sup>

After the war, a conflict between the burial society (*Khesed shel Emes*), a representation of Orthodoxy, and members of the community who practised a more liberal form of Judaism lasted six years. The conflict illustrated the internal disension within the community. The refusal of the Orthodox to make concessions led to repeated failures to elect a Board of Directors representative of the Jewish community's different elements. The elections gave rise to clashes marked by allegations of fraud, scandals and insults. Finally, the burial society issued a leaflet calling on "the entire Jewish population of Liège-Seraing" to attend a protest meeting at the beginning of April 1947 "against the dictatorial operation of the synagogue administration"<sup>74</sup>. A June 1952 report on the turmoils of the election of the new Board of Directors even mentions police intervention. After six years of upheaval, the advent of a presidency under the aegis of Girsz Kruglanski brought a return to a precarious state of tranquillity.<sup>75</sup>

*The construction of the memory of the Shoah in Liège*

The construction of the memory of the Shoah in Liège began in April 1945 with a ceremony at the synagogue in tribute to the recently deceased American president

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Theodore Roosevelt. At this commemoration, Iosif Lepkifker, the officiating minister, saluted those who had helped save Jews during the war, specifically mentioning Mgr Kerkhofs, Mgr de Gruyter and Georges de Lannoy, who (as was learned later) played a direct role in his rescue.<sup>76</sup>

This was the starting point for a major effort by the Jewish community of Liège to recognise those who had rescued Jews. It was mainly Catholic rescuers who were honoured, such as Mgr Kerkhofs, nicknamed “the Prince of Charity”, and the lawyer Max-Albert van den Berg, known as “the third vicar of Saint-Christophe”<sup>77</sup>. A stele in van den Berg’s memory, financed by the Jewish community, was inaugurated in Banneux in 1960<sup>78</sup>. This approach was extended over time, notably with the state of Israel’s establishment, in 1963, of the title “Righteous Among the Nations”.<sup>79</sup>

Vincent Genin, a historian, has studied this memorial journey, highlighting the controversies that have marked it, such as the questions of conversions, the fate of children after the liberation, and the hesitations of certain members of the Van den Berg network concerning the restitution of Jewish children to the CDJ.<sup>80</sup>

#### *A controversial memory*

Far from subsiding, the controversy surrounding the AJB persisted within the community. It was against this backdrop that, in 1948, Rafal Janowski, president of the Société Israélite de Bienfaisance, undertook an initiative to establish “peace in the Jewish community of Liège”. He published a pamphlet announcing the creation of a committee that would represent all sections of the Jewish population of Liège<sup>81</sup>. The committee’s aim was to put a definitive end to the accusations made against certain members of the community: this was to be done by inviting anyone with grievances to express them in writing, signed, before 10 October. After this deadline, unjustified rumours would be considered malicious and unfounded. Janowski was probably convinced that the dismissal order issued in April 1947 by the Liège public prosecutor’s office, followed in June by the dismissal of the case and the dismissal orders in favour of the AJB officials, was the answer to quell the controversy. This was to misunderstand Albert Wolf’s determination. The response to the initiative was scathing.

When he discovered that Noè Nozyce, former president of the Liège committee of the AJB, had been granted the status of political prisoner for his supposed patriotic and selfless activities, Wolf mobilised around thirty Jews from Liège to oppose the decision. Their struggle bore fruit: Nozyce was stripped of his title and benefits, and the synagogue immediately banned Nozyce from the *Mitzvot*<sup>82</sup>. Nozyce protested. The Jewish community of Liège (CI) then asked the Consistoire Central israélite de Belgique (CCIB) for an appropriate response. The CCIB, however, opted for an evasive attitude, formulating its response in such a way as to avoid any commitment to specific measures<sup>83</sup>. Could anyone have expected more? Indeed, some of

Nozyce's former colleagues on the AJB Steering Committee were reappointed to their community posts after the war. For example, Salomon Van den Berg remained in his position as administrator of the Jewish hospice (rue de la Glacière in Brussels), and Salomon Ullmann retained his position as Chief Rabbi of Belgium, which he had held since 1940.<sup>84</sup>

The publication in 1965 of the book *Les Belges face à la persécution raciale 1940-1944* by Betty Garfinkels, wife of an official of the Liège committee of the AJB, rekindled tensions and sparked new controversy. Albert Wolf denounced the author's bias and was supported in his action by around thirty protesters from Liège, including the historian Minna Ajzenberg-Karny, the future minister Jean Gol and leading figures from Brussels<sup>85</sup>.

The deaths of the last witnesses put an end to this long controversy in Liège.<sup>86</sup>

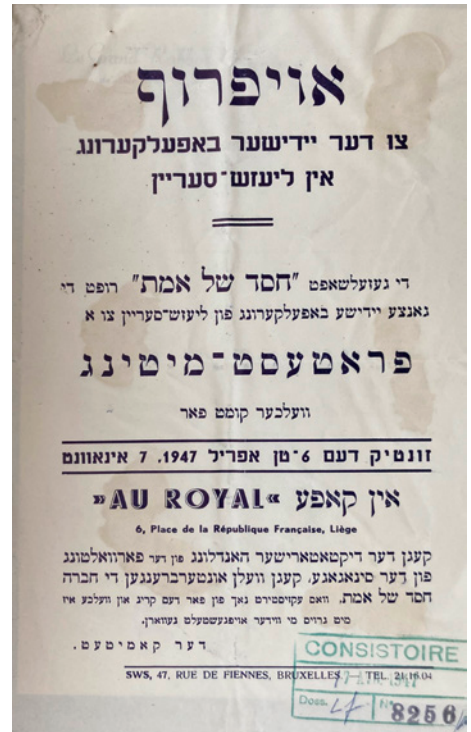
### *A place to remember*

In 1949, the Société Israélite de Bienfaisance de Liège inaugurated a memorial in its synagogue on rue Léon Frédéricq to honour 393 Liège victims of the Shoah. On 8 May 1955, a memorial to the Resistance was erected in Liège and inaugurated by King Baudouin. Although the Jews were not mentioned at the inauguration, they were not ignored: they were represented by the officiating minister Josif Lepchivcher and Chief Rabbi Salomon Ullmann, who willingly agreed to play the role of extras in the Citadel of the Resistance celebration.

### *The turning point in memory*

The founding of the "Mémoire de Dannes-Camiers" association in the late 1990s, at the instigation of magistrate Foulek Ringelheim, marked a break with the previous commemorative approach. Composed of deportees and their descendants, the organisation undertook in-depth historical research into the wartime fate of the Jews of Liège.

Since then, the association has made a sustained effort in the field of academic research, enriching the historiographical literature with publications and articles, and stimulating intellectual debate through conferences, seminars, exhibitions and documentaries. It has also taken part in innovative research initiatives, offering unwavering support to the families of the victims, while honouring the fallen by erecting a memorial. In this way, "Mémoire de Dannes-Camiers" has become a benchmark in the historical study of the Shoah in Liège, marking the transition from a period of simple commemoration to an era of active historical engagement.



– Liège, 6 April 1947, “Appeal to the Jewish population of Liège-Seraing. The Association Khesed shel Emes (funeral home) calls on the entire Jewish population of Liège-Seraing for a demonstration to be held on Sunday 6 April 1947 and will take place at the café “Au Royal”, on the square of the French Republic number 6 in Liège. Against the dictatorial operation of the administration of the synagogue, against the intention to establish the brotherhood Khesed shel Emes, which had existed before the war and which, with great difficulty, was established. The committee”. Translation Alain Mihály (FMC)

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### EPILOGUE

While the liberation of Liège in September 1944 was a moment of joy and relief, the reality that followed was far from straightforward. The city, like the rest of Belgium, faced a complex array of challenges on its journey towards reconstruction and reconciliation. In the immediate post-war period, Liège, like many Belgian cities, was plunged into a period of political and social unrest. Strikes and trade-union demands, symptomatic of a desire for change and social justice, testified to the energy and dynamism of society, but also revealed deep divisions within it. The Royal Question exacerbated these tensions, raising fundamental questions about the nature of the Resistance and collaboration.

For the Jewish community of Liège, the end of the war did not mean a return to normality. Survivors of the Shoah were faced with a brutal reality, including the loss of their loved ones and the need to rebuild their lives in a city scarred by conflict and despoilment. The fact that they were not officially recognised as victims made reconstruction and reintegration into the socio-economic fabric all the more difficult. At the Liberation, the Aide aux Israélites Victimes de la Guerre (AIVG), an organisation set up by the Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ), played a crucial role in helping survivors return to something reminiscent of normality.

The commitment of Albert Wolf and those close to him highlighted the failings of the leaders of the Liège Jewish community. The Jewish community, sundered by internal conflicts, struggled to formulate a coherent response to the problems posed by the post-war period. Despite their significant contribution to the Resistance, the Jews of Liège, like those of other regions, were largely absent from the collective narrative of the Resistance in the post-war years. This oversight helped to perpetuate the myth of Jewish passivity, ignoring the active role played by many Jews in the Resistance and their sacrifices. The emphasis placed on the rescuers, particularly those who were Catholic, to the detriment of recognition of the Jewish Resistance, fuelled this marginalisation in the collective memory for many years.

The pioneering work of historian Maxime Steinberg in the 1980s marked the beginning of the historiography of the Shoah in Belgium. A large number of works on the Shoah followed, enabling the field of research to be broadened and the scope of this unprecedented event to be better understood, even on a regional scale. In Liège, the creation of the “Mémoire de Dannes-Camiers” association illustrates this effort. ■

### ABBREVIATIONS

AGR	Kingdom Archives - State Archives in Belgium, Brussels
AIVG	Help for Israelis who were Victims of the War
AJB	Association of Jews in Belgium
AMB	Military Auditorium in Brussels
AVLg	Archives of the City of Liège
CCIB	Consistoire central israélite de Belgique, Brussels
CDJ	Committee for the Defence of Jews
Cegesoma	Centre for Contemporary War and Society Studies, Brussels
FMC	Fondation de la Mémoire Contemporaine, Brussels
Joint	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
MJB	Jewish Museum of Belgium, Brussels
MCIL	Kruglanski Museum of the Jewish Community of Liège
OE	Office des Étrangers
OT	Office du Travail
OT	<i>Organization Todt</i>
SVG	Federal Public Service Social Security, War Victims Service, Brussels
SSJ	Jewish Social Services, Brussels



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**Thierry Rozenblum**, grandson of a deportee, is a historian who has collected a wealth of documents concerning the Jews of Liège during the Occupation, between 1940 and 1944. His publications include “Une cité si ardente. L’administration communale de Liège et la persécution des Juifs, 1940-1942”, *Revue d’histoire de la Shoah*,

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- (3) The decree of 25/10/1942, published in the *Moniteur belge des arrêtés ministériels et autres arrêtés des secrétaires généraux* of 1/11/1942, created Grand Liège. The decree of 6 November appointed the mayor and aldermen of this new administrative entity, most of whom were Rexistes – AMB, no. 392 L/45 – 401 L/45, dossier Albert Dargent et consorts (“Grand Liège” case).
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- (7) The conference of burgomasters of Greater Liège was re-established, with its thirty communes and communal councils.
- (8) *La Meuse*, 9 October 1944.
- (9) The situation in Greece was bound to worry the Allies that “excesses” would jeopardise regional stability. Between 3 December 1944 and 11 January 1945, Athens was the scene of violent clashes between the Greek resistance forces, notably EAM-ELAS and KKE, and the British army.
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- (12) See *Nizkor*, notice Michelson-Rozen.
- (13) Interview with Bernard Wilkin, RTBF, 23 January 2020.
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- (25) See *Nizkor*, *Nizkor*, notice Nozice-Lasar.
- (26) On this subject, see Jean-Philippe Schreiber and Rudi Van Doorslaer (eds.), *Les curateurs du ghetto. L’Association des Juifs en Belgique sous l’occupation nazie*, Brussels, Labor, 2004.
- (27) See *Nizkor*, notice Lepkivker-Hersonsky.
- (28) Albert Wolf in *Dictionnaire biographique des Juifs de Belgique, Figures du judaïsme belge XIX<sup>e</sup> – XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, edited by Jean-Philippe Schreiber, Brussels, De Boeck & Larcier, 2002, p. 365; see [http://www.ihoes.be/PDF/inventaires/Wolf\\_Albert.pdf](http://www.ihoes.be/PDF/inventaires/Wolf_Albert.pdf); Thierry Rozenblum, *Une cité si ardente*, *op. cit.*; SVG, Dossier de statut des Résistants Civils, Wolf Albert no. 749938; SVG, Dossier statut des Résistants par la Presse Clandestine, Wolf Albert no. 609556.
- (29) Auschwitz Foundation, The Liberation of the Camps and the Return of the Deportees: [www.auschwitz.be/fr/activites/expositions-itinerantes/la-liberation-des-camp](http://www.auschwitz.be/fr/activites/expositions-itinerantes/la-liberation-des-camp), accessed on 3 July 2024.
- (30) *La Meuse*, 14 September 1944.
- (31) Catherine Massange, *Bâtir le lendemain. L’Aide aux Israélites victimes de la guerre et le Service social juif de 1944 à nos jours*, Brussels, Didier Devillez, 2002, p. 17.
- (32) *Ibid.*; Catherine Massange, “La politique sociale”, in Jean-Philippe

Schreiber, Rudi Van Doorslaer (eds.), *Les curateurs du ghetto*, op. cit. pp. 277-316; Catherine Massange, *La création de la Centrale d'œuvres Sociales Juives ou comment animer une conscience sociale*, Brussels, 2002.

(33) See *Nizkor*, Steinberg-Sudit notice.

(34) This surname is also spelt "Jospa" or "lospa".

(35) See *Nizkor*, notice, Pailloucq-lochpa.

(36) Four-page typed document, entitled "Le Comité de Défense des Juifs à Liège" (The Committee for the Defence of Jews in Liège), describing the history of the formation of the committee, its past activities, the events that occurred during the Liberation, as well as the new missions assigned and the work plan envisaged, source: Archives of the IHOES (Institut d'Histoire Ouvrière, Économique et Sociale), Collection Albert Wolf, Liège, dated September 1944.

(37) See Barbara Dickshen and Thierry Rozenblum, *Jusqu'à 120 ans! De l'hospice israélite à l'Heureux Séjour. Une institution juive à Bruxelles de 1875 à nos jours*, Brussels, FMC, 2020.

(38) The two delegates mandated by the President and the Administrator of the AIVG, Alfred Goldschmidt and Chaïm Perelman, were given power of attorney to manage and meet the needs of the Liège section, source: IHOES, Papiers Albert Wolf, document of power of attorney, Brussels, 18 May 1945.

(39) Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the AIVG, held on 14 August 1945 in Brussels, source: Jewish Social Service.

(40) Thierry Rozenblum, *Une cité si ardente*, op. cit. p. 154-155.

(41) Testimony of Zinger Joseph (Caïm), taken in Luxembourg on 16 October 2008 by Thierry Rozenblum. See *Nizkor*, notice Zinger – Goldstein, op. cit.

(42) Thierry Rozenblum, *Une cité si ardente*, op. cit. pp. 142-154; see also Florence Matteazzi, *L'attitude du clergé face à la Shoah dans le diocèse de Liège (1940-1945)*, unpublished dissertation, Louvain-la-Neuve, UCL, 1995-1996.

(43) "Draft internal statutes and plan for the distribution of responsibilities among the members of the Board of Directors. Integration of the Jewish masses into the economic and social life of the country". Charleroi, 17 February 1945, source: IHOES, Albert Wolf Papers. See also the biographical note on Pinkus Broder in the *Dictionnaire biographique des Juifs de Belgique*, p. 68.

(44) See Katy Hazan, "Les Enfants Cachés en France et en Belgique, Essai de Comparaison", *European Review*, 2017.

(45) See Vincent Genin, "La conversion des enfants juifs cachés dans la région liégeoise (1942-2010). Mythes et réalités", *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 109 (3-4), p. 26-29.

(46) In her study, Catherine Massange refers to an interview with Yvonne Jospa (FMC, 1995-1996) in which she mentions "the Zionists who wanted to send orphans to Palestine at all costs", a probable allusion to Félicie Liwer (alias Fela, wife of Chaïm Perelman), who was in charge of the CDJ's children's commission. For more details, see Catherine Massange, "Les homes d'enfants juifs à la libération", *Les Cahiers de la Mémoire Contemporaine*, no. 9, 2010, pp. 59-87.

(47) Testimony of P. E., collected in Grivegnée on 20 March 1998 by Thierry Rozenblum, cf. *Nizkor*, notice P.-S.

(48) Martin Conway, *Les Chagrins*, op. cit. p. 104.

(49) Interrogation of G. Garfinkels by the Épuration Commission of the Liège CDJ, 16 November 1944, sources: IHOES, Papier Albert Wolf, CDJ Liège; see also Grégoire Garfinkel file no. 444030-N-1944, Auditorat Militaire de Belgique (AMB).

(50) AMB n° 5450-N-1946 dossier AB; AMB n° 4030-N-1944, dossier M.S.

(51) Order of 28 October 1940; see poster posted in the commune of Liège between 18 November and 9 December 1940, AVLg.

(52) Serge Klarsfeld and Maxime Steinberg, *Le Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de Belgique*, Brussels, The Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, Union des déportés juifs en Belgique et filles et fils de la déportation, 1982. For a detailed study of the Shoah in the Liège region, see *Nizkor*.

(53) Communication from a member (potentially a cabinet secretary) to losif Lepkifker, officiating minister, no place specified, dated 20 October 1944. Also includes an anonymous, undated handwritten note to losif Lepkifker, source: AVLg, BAP.

In November 1944, the local authorities were ordered to submit their lists of Jewish populations to the Ministry of the Interior, which then handed them over to the Comité de Défense des Juifs (CDJ). Among these documents, the register of Jews in the city of Liège, whose disappearance remains unexplained, was examined in the 1960s.

(54) Alain Colignon, *Bologne Joseph*, op. cit. Thierry Rozenblum, "Une cité si ardente. L'administration communale", op. cit. no. 179, 2003, p. 46.

(55) Minutes of the public hearing (no. 2342) of 6 November 1945 (Féron President). AMB, no. 2764/Mag. 1/44, Joseph Bologne and Lambert Destexhe file.

(56) *La Wallonie*, 15 November 1945. See also Rozenblum, "Une cité si ardente. L'administration communale", op. cit. p. 46-47, the letter dated 16 January 1945 from the former aldermen to Burgomaster Bologna: "You have resisted as much as possible, often giving up only a shadow of what was asked of you – as a measure of lesser evil – in order to reserve the essentials that could harm the country."

(57) Thierry Rozenblum, "Une cité si ardente. L'administration communale", op. cit. no. 179, 2003, pp. 9-73.

(58) AMB, no. 392 L 45 – 401 L 45, "Grand Liège" case, Dargent Théophile file.

(59) Letter dated 27 December 1977, addressed to the Auditor General of the Military Court (AMB, no. 2287 N 1947, Wilhem Stade file).

(60) Pierre Telgmann, born in Belgium on 4 July 1913, is of German nationality (AMB, no. 386/L/47 Pierre Telgmann file); OE A118139

(61) André Donnet, "L'instruction par la justice militaire : un non-lieu de mémoire", in Jean-Philippe Schreiber, Rudi Van Doorslaer (eds.), op. cit. pp. 375-415.

(62) On this subject, see the details of the meeting between Bologna and the *Stadtkommissar* Ranze, Hôtel de Ville de Liège, 19 November 1940, Rozenblum, "Une cité si ardente. L'administration communale", op. cit. p. 2.

(63) Most of the existing archives of the Liège Jewish community are preserved by the Consistoire Central israélite de Belgique. It is regrettable



to note a certain lack of interest on the part of the community leaders of Liège in the history of their institution, leading to the total loss of the archives of the Jewish community of Liège.

(64) See the letter from General H.L. Peckham (Commander, US Army) dated 21 December 1948 to Iosif Lepkifker, source: CCIB, file no. 2256.

(65) Elimelech Fremder's family, protected by Vicar Boufflette of Saint-Christophe church, benefited from the support of the local community. Their son Pinkus, who joined the Secret Army, was killed in August 1943. Vicar Boufflette, who was deported to the Dora camp on 21 February 1945, died between 10 and 15 March of the same year. Reference: Claudia-Elena Nizet, *Les Justes de la Province de Liège*, dissertation, Université de Liège, 2013-2014, p. 109. For further reading, see Sébastien Belleflamme, *La croix et le glaive. Clergé séculier et résistance dans le diocèse de Liège (1940-1944)*, licentiate thesis, ULg, Liège, 2007-2008. For more information on the Fremder-Wagberg family, see their biographical note in Thierry Rozenblum, *Nizkor*, *op. cit.*

(66) See the letter from the Liège Jewish community to the Consistoire israélite de Belgique, dated 7 January 1946, source: CCIB, file no. 22565.

(67) The synagogue at 19 rue Léon Frédéricq was formerly known as rue de la Boverie.

(68) Sources: Archives Générales du Royaume (AGR), Prezerowitsch Maisy file, no. 2000459.

(69) See *Nizkor*, notices Pailloucq-Iochpa, Maier Fuks, Lajzer Koninski, Chia Markowicz, Chaïm Peguine, Idel Steinberg and Henriette Picard, *op. cit.*

(70) Source: IHOES, Papiers Albert Wolf, Société israélite de Bienfaisance de la communauté israélite de Liège, *Activité & Bilan de l'Exercice 1947-1948*.

(71) In July 1947, Joseph Ein was elected Chairman of the Liège Jewish Community Board, a position he left in February 1948.

(72) Thierry Rozenblum, *Une cité si ardente*, *op. cit.* p. 16-18.

(73) Report by Louis Wied, President of the Liège Jewish community, to the CCIB Board of Directors, dated Liège, 28 March 1939. CCIB, non-inventoried fonds (Russia archives – 2-2-56).

(74) Note from the Jewish community of Liège to the board of directors of the CCIB concerning disturbances at the synagogue, initiated by the *Hesed-Chel-Hemes* Society. Includes a pamphlet calling for a demonstration. Thanks to Alain Mihály (FMC) for his translation. Liège, 14 April 1947, CCIB file no. 22565.

(75) Communication from the Jewish community of Liège addressed to the CCIB Board of Directors, concerning the elections for the triennial renewal of the members of the Board of Directors, dated 27 May 1952, registered, Liège 6 June 1952, CCIB file no. 22565.

(76) Georges de Lannoy, President of Caritas and a bank director, and Mgr de Gruyter, a priest at Saint-Christophe since 1940, were honoured as Righteous Among the Nations in 1997. Mgr Kerkhofs, Bishop of Liège, received the same recognition in 1981, all hailed for their commitment to saving Jews. For more on the role of the clergy in the Liège Resistance, see Sébastien Belleflamme, *op. cit.*; Vincent Genin, *La conversion*, *op. cit.*, 109 (3-4), pp. 815-856; Florence Matteazzi, *op. cit.*, and Thierry Rozenblum, "Une cité si ardente", *op. cit.*, pp. 142-154.

(77) See Thierry Rozenblum, *ibid*, note 49 p. 188.

(78) Let us recall the milestones in the tribute paid to the lawyer Max-Albert van den Berg: in 1960, his first commemorative stele was unveiled in Banneux, financed by the Liège Jewish community. Thirty-five years later, in 1995, he was honoured as Righteous Among the Nations. The city of Liège then paid tribute to him by naming a stairway after him, the Passage Albert Van den Berg. Finally, on 22 November 2010, a second stele financed by the Foyer Culturel Israélite de Liège was unveiled in the Laveu district. In fact, the process of paying tribute to Max-Albert van den Berg continues today: due to "lack of visibility", a project is underway to relocate the second stele.

(79) See Claudia-Elena Nizet, *op. cit.*

(80) See Vincent Genin, *La conversion*, *op. cit.* 109 (3-4), pp. 815-856.

(81) Source: IHOES, Albert Wolf Papers.

(82) In this context, the term *Mitzvot* refers to an obligation or good deed performed by the participants in a synagogue service. This implies active participation by the congregation, which is considered to be a fulfilment of divine commandments and an essential element of religious practice.

(83) Correspondence from the Jewish community of Liège to the Board of Directors of the CCIB concerning Noé Nozycze, Liège, 20 June 1948, CCIB file no. 22565. Followed by the CCIB's reply to the letter of 20 June 1948, Brussels, 18 February 1949, CCIB file no. 22565.

(84) Salomon Van den Berg was Treasurer of the Steering Committee and Chairman of the Brussels Local Committee. In April 1943, he was promoted to Chief Administrator of the AJB. Salomon Ullmann, who had become Grand Rabbi of Belgium in 1940, also became President of the AJB. However, he resigned in August 1942. Alongside Salomon Van den Berg and Noé Nozycze, Ullmann was one of the signatories of the summons to the assembly camp in Mechelen, August 1942.

(85) See Jacques Deom, "Vingt ans après, les crispations de la mémoire", in Jean-Philippe Schreiber, Rudi Van Doorslaer (eds.), *op. cit.* p. 417-432.

(86) For an in-depth study of the subject, see *ibid*. This book is the first comprehensive contribution to the subject.