

The Mission of Victor Martin¹

By Bernard Krouck. *Victor Martin, Un Résistant sorti de l'oublié*. Ed. Les Éperonniers, Brussels 1995.²

“Victor Martin is the man about whom we had never spoken.”

In 1943, The Committee for the Defense of Belgian Jews sent Victor Martin, a resistance fighter from the Independence Front,³ to investigate the fate of Belgian Jews who had been deported East.

On a mission to Auschwitz (1943)

For several years, the general public has recognized the work of the Righteous Among Nations. The Righteous were men and women throughout Europe, who admirably risked their own lives to hide and protect Jews, in particular Jewish children, who otherwise would have faced an agonizing death in the Nazi extermination camps. The irruption of these figures—these Righteous—within European societies reminded people of their indifference to the misfortunes of others. Therefore, collective, societal memories willingly omitted the Righteous. Their stories are now emerging.

Among the sixteen thousand Righteous Among Nations recognized and honored by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, we can name Aristide de Sousa-Mendès, the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux. In 1940, Aristide de Sousa-Mendès issued thirty thousand visas within a few days. Ten thousand of these visas were given to Jews and thus allowed them to take refuge in Portugal or to travel overseas. The Japanese consul in Kaunas, Chiune Sugihara, saved six thousand Jewish lives, by allowing individuals to flee to East through the Soviet Union. In Hungary at the height of the deportations, the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, his Swiss colleague Charles Lutz, and his Spanish colleague Angel Sanz Briz, accomplished remarkable work to save Jews in Budapest from, literally pulling them from the claws of the Nazis. Finally,

Oskar Schindler, recognized thanks to the Steven Spielberg film,⁴ was not the only one of his kind, even within a German population that was terrorized or fanaticized by Hitler's racism.

These men and women are a credit to our continent, and are role models whose stories I believe must be taught, and also included in our civic education. But if these Righteous Among Nations saved ill-fated individuals, we know less about one man, a member of the Belgian Resistance, who in the middle of the war was sent to track down Jewish deportees and to find out what happened to them. To the best of my knowledge, this mission was singular in the European Resistance, with the exception of missions by the Polish resistance fighters Jan Nowak⁵ and Jan Karski, who made the resistance fighters of the “flat country’s”⁶ aware of the urgency of aid and rescue missions. That work, having already been undertaken by compassionate Belgian civilians, protected three thousand Jewish children until Liberation. From the darkness of the Occupation right up to the gates of the Nazi hell, a single, modest, yet exceptional man confronted totalitarianism to reveal the terrible truth of deportation to the world.

This man was Victor Martin.

1) Victor Martin, A Humanist in the Resistance

a) An Attentive Academic

On January 19, 1912, Victor Martin was born in Blaton, a town in western Hainaut, a few miles away from the French border. Martin was the son of a hosiery manufacturer. He was a brilliant student in Catholic schools, who expressed his social concerns from a young age. While studying at the Catholic University of Louvain, Martin successfully completed a doctoral thesis on “The Public Placement of Workers in Belgium and Abroad”. To complete his research, the young sociologist traveled around pre-war Europe. Martin visited Switzerland, but also traveled to the France during the era of the Popular Front,⁷ and to swastika-studded Germany. It seems

that the awareness Martin gained from these experiences led him to commit himself to aiding the victims of state fascism, in particular the victims of the Spanish Republic and China. Draped in the prestige of a young graduate fresh out of university, Martin may even have hosted talks on the question of fascism in his hometown.

However, let it not be said that Victor Martin left school to become a political agitator. That form of political engagement was not in his nature. Rather, Martin pursued his own path, one which even allowed him to dabble in teaching. During this time, Belgium, which was experiencing an economic crisis characterized by high unemployment rates, saw the growth of Rexism, a fascist movement led by Léon Degrelle. These economic conditions fueled such types of movements, especially because poverty and anti-Semitism had brought successive waves of thousands of Jewish immigrants from Germany, and from Central, and Eastern Europe into Belgium. Belgium served as a temporary haven for these unfortunate immigrants, who would have loved to make it their permanent home. Victor Martin reached adulthood within this climate of political tension and international uncertainties. On May 10, 1940, Nazi Germany disregarded Brussel's proclamation of neutrality and attacked Belgium. This was the moment when the attentive academic Victor Martin became a committed patriot.

b) A Committed Patriot

Victor Martin spent a long time searching for a way to contact the Belgian Resistance. Finally, in September 1942, the young academic officially registered with the Independence Front. This organization was founded on March 15th, 1941, by three men: the journalist Fernand Demany, the priest and Christian representative André Boland, and the doctor Albert Marteaux who was also a member of the central committee of the Belgian Communist Party. Although there were many communists active in this movement, they did not constitute the majority of

participants. Socialists, Social Christians, liberals, and left-wing Catholics all worked side by side, even though the Communist Party was the only organized political force in the Independence Front. Nevertheless, the weakness of the Communist Party in the Belgian political scene, which was aggravated by the German-Soviet pact in August 1939,⁸ prohibited the Independence Front from transforming into a simple link between the Communist Party and the Resistance.

Additionally, two types of military organizations were formed. The Belgian Partisan Army (ABP), also called the Armed Partisans, was made up of “permanent” resistance fighters. These men, which included Raoul Baligand, were seasoned and motivated veterans of International Brigades. Patriotic militias also formed local reserves to support the Armed Partisans and the allied forces during the battles for Belgian liberation.

Within civil society, the Independence Front decentralized the responsibility and control of resistance efforts. They created programs such as Free Medicine, Free Justice, the Resistance Committee for Middle Education, the Peasant Defense Movement, the Union Struggle Committee, and to broadly cast their net, groups like the Women's Union, the National Youth Rally, and Friends of the USSR.

In 1942, a new organization known as the Committee for the Defense of Jews emerged. This group later played an essential role in the course of events.

The Independence Front had clear objectives: the rejection the occupation of Belgian territory, resisting the occupier and its collaborators, punishing traitors, defending public freedoms, and preparing for the general uprising alongside the allied armies, otherwise known as “D-Day”.

Patriotism inspired Victor Martin to join the Independence Front. Well after the war, he explained his thinking as: *“Naive. Despite reading Mein Kampf,⁹ the profound nature of Nazism, (and the ramblings of a former opposition leader?¹⁰) my commitment to the Resistance did not stem from anti-fascism. Rather it came from a hatred towards a nation that believed through war it could enslave Europe, to a supposed master race.”* Victor Martin's cultural expertise, his professional experience, and his perfect knowledge of the German language did not predispose him to be the average resistance fighter.

Because Martin maintained connections to German academic circles, he proposed, in conversations with Resistance leaders, that he could carry out a secret mission to Germany if necessary. He believed that using academic research as a pretext, he could easily move around the Reich, without arousing suspicion or becoming a target of surveillance. But in Victor Martin's mind, he could only engage in industrial espionage¹¹... For him, the rest of his story would be completely unexpected.

2) Brussels to Auschwitz

a) The Situation of Jews in Belgium from 1940 to 1942

From 1940, the German military government that occupied Belgium, and controlled the Nord and Pas de Calais *départements* of France, designed and promoted anti-Semitic policies. On August 23, 1941, Jews endured forced concentration into four large city-centers, Brussels, Liège, Charleroi, and Antwerp. A curfew from 8 pm to 7 am was imposed on Jews living in these cities. On November 25, 1941, the Association of Jews in Belgium (AJB) was formed. This group was a type of Jewish council made up of public, civil, and religious figures who were tasked with performing administrative tasks otherwise carried out by the German authorities. The

census was meant to allow for the creation of a database that would be used to meticulously plan the arrests and deportations of Jews.

On December 1, 1941, Jews were excluded from Belgian schools. The rulings on March 11 and May 8, 1942 stripped Belgian Jews of all rights to paid vacation and sick leave. Finally, on May 27, 1942, the yellow star was implemented. This act was the straw that broke the camel's back. At the request of the mayor of Uccle, Jean Hérinckx, who was also a resistance fighter, the Conference of Mayors of the Brussels metropolitan area protested and refused to implement the required wearing of the yellow star. This was a unique approach in the European Resistance. This was June 5, 1942. From that date onward, everything went very quickly. To educate Jewish children from public schools, a young couple, Fela and Chaïm Perelman, both Jewish academics, set up a network of schools known as “guardian houses” with the support of many public figures. This included Désiré Tits, the General Director of Public Education in Brussels, Jean Drapier, the alderman of Public Education of Anderlecht, David Adamski, the secretary of the Association of Jewish Academics of Brussels, and, of course, Jean Hérinckx. The introduction of the yellow star into Belgian society required new emergency actions. Jewish children had to be dispersed and hidden in Christian families, as well as civil and religious institutions.

Ghert Jospa, a Belgian Jewish engineer who was involved in the Resistance through the Independence Front, decided to increase his resistance efforts. For this reason, he met with representatives from all branches of the Jewish Community, notably Robert Mandelbaum from the group Jewish Solidarity, and Abouch Werber from Poalei Zion mutual aid¹². At the time of the Second National Conference of the Independence Front in August 1942, the deportations of Belgian Jews had just begun, originally starting on August 4th. At this meeting, Jospa fought to establish the Committee for the Defense of Jews, an organization that he led with Emile

Hambresin, a Catholic left-wing resistance fighter. Before the war, Hambresin served as the president of the Belgian League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, and as a leader in a Belgian-Chinese friendship association. Jospa contacted the Perelmans, who personally encouraged the Dutch industrialist Benjamin Nykerk, the Belgian businessman Eugène Hellendael, and the head of the Brussels Jewish community Edouard Rotkel, to participate in organized resistance actions.

In September, all these people met at the Perelman's home, which was located on Rue de la Pêche in Uccle. This meeting was the true start of the Committee for the Defense of the Jews (CDJ). The CDJ brought together almost all social and political leanings of the Jewish community in Belgium. Very quickly, the CDJ resumed the social activities originally organized by the ABJ,¹³ an organization that had been neutralized by a Resistance attack on August 29th.

The CDJ published underground newspapers in French, Flemish and Yiddish, and created false identity papers. However, above all, the organization wanted to know the fate of the Jews who had already been deported.

This was the moment when Victor Martin's mission began.

b) The First Convoys Towards the Unknown and the Genesis of Martin's Mission

This testimony was recounted by Victor Martin himself: *"Since September 1942, a large number of Jews including men, women, children, and the aged, had been deported from Belgium to Germany. Convoys continued to leave the country. Where were these ill-fated people taken? What became of them? That is what we needed to know. The information available to the Independence Front mentioned the region of Upper Silesia, the capital city of Katowice, and the nearby town Auschwitz. Persistent rumors circulated about the systematic massacre of women and children, as well as the forced labor of men in concentration camps. Likewise, the CDJ*

wanted to know the fate of the Jewish community in Sosnowiec, a town that was almost exclusively populated by Jewish families.”

Among informational sources, were found those well-known postcards from the Upper Silesia region “*announcing a happy arrival at [the deportees’] destination*”. Then, silence...

Victor Martin was tasked by the Independence Front and the Committee for the Defense of Jews to embark on an intelligence mission, to discover the actual fate of the Jews who were deported from Belgium. However, he needed a solid cover and valid identification papers in order to travel to Poland. Therefore, Martin went to a cultural center opened by the Germans in Brussels where he expressed his wish to go to Germany, to reconnect with Professor Léopold von Wiese, a sociologist who worked in the same field as Martin and taught in Cologne. Very quickly, he was issued a passport, and Martin left for Germany, equipped with his forms. One could never be too careful. In Cologne, Victor Martin saw his former teachers again and spoke with them about the “differential psychology of social classes”. Soon after, Martin asked to meet a professor, who was a fervent Nazi but also a renowned sociologist at the University of Breslau. On January 4, 1943, the foreign section of the Cologne police granted him permission (*Erlaubnisschein*) to go to Berlin, Frankfurt, and Breslau, between February 4 and 20, 1943. The Gestapo did not perceive the young Belgian academic as a threat.

After a few days in Breslau, Martin took the train to Sosnowiec. After the war, he provided more details: “*In Breslau, I was at the doorstep of the Upper Silesia and Katowice-Auschwitz regions. I had acquired the information and names of various Belgian Jews who had managed to be hospitalized at the Sosnowiec ghetto hospital near Auschwitz and had been able to briefly communicate their situation to resistance groups in Belgium.*”

Victor Martin was now hard at work. He did not know that he would be confronted with an unsuspected reality, the terrible truth that was the horror of Nazi concentration camps. His intelligence mission would go far beyond the military conflicts he had originally imagined when he first joined the Resistance.

3) Up to the Gates of Hell

a) A Successful but Dangerous Mission

After leaving Breslau, Victor Martin went to Sosnowiec, a small Polish town where Jews from the surrounding countryside were gathered. It was a sort of open ghetto, where thousands of Jews lived, in increasingly grueling conditions. Yet they lived with the hope that in exchange for the “vital” labor that they performed for the occupying forces, their lives would be saved, and that they could survive until the end of the war.

After Liberation, Victor Martin recounted his first contacts: “(...) *I went to the Jewish administrative services and without saying what purpose brought me there, I posed as a Belgian worker in Germany, looking for members of his family. They were very suspicious, and wondered if I was an agent provocateur. Nevertheless, they told me that they were able to rescue a good number of sick, Belgian Jews from the concentration camps. They told me these Jews were being treated at the Jewish hospital in Sosnowiec. By visiting them, I managed to find out in which camps most of the Jewish men and women deported from Belgium were located.*”

However, Victor Martin had a difficult time accepting the fate of these unfortunate people. “*I managed to enter the ghetto. The stories I heard could be summarized as follows: ‘The Belgian Jews arrived together at the Auschwitz camp. Some were put to work. A few others were assigned to an external commando and were able to enter the ghetto, and notably the hospital. If you look around the area, it is possible you will learn some news about the Jews*

deported from Belgium from the volunteer workers. But you will find neither the very young nor the very old. Everyone here was certain that they were all killed and burned. Every day, entire trains enter the camp that can only accommodate a few thousand detainees. Draw your own conclusion: we are all here on a reprieve from death.'"

Victor Martin remained skeptical. For the young academic, Germany was first and foremost a culture. *"Kant and Hegel, Marx and Engels, Albert Einstein, and so many other celebrated men. Were Belgian prisoners of war not treated humanely, in accordance with the Geneva Convention? Could a people of an old civilization commit genocide against elders, children, and disabled people who did not present a threat to their combat?"*

Victor Martin's first conclusion was that his informants, *"obsessed by ancient persecutions, must be exaggerating"*. But the young Belgian resistance fighter also admitted his fear of facing the truth. It was that horrible.

In Katowice, Victor Martin met some French workers from the Firminy¹⁴ region, who worked in the immediate vicinity of the Auschwitz camp. Martin got along well with them and was invited to visit them. This was a unique opportunity to personally evaluate the truth of the statements made by the Jews of the Sosnowiec Ghetto. Victor Martin recounted after the war: *"Having expressed some curiosity about the treatment reserved for prisoners and particularly for Jews, I obtained, in essence, the following statements: Do not try to learn out what happened to the women and children. You will not find them again. The Germans built high-capacity crematory ovens that operate day and night. Depending on the direction of the wind, we can detect the smell of burned bodies. How do they kill these ill-fated people? It is a mystery to us. Our considered advice is to avoid discussing these issues with the Germans. Here everyone knows, and no one says a word.'"*

The “Victor Martin Report,” kept at Yad Vashem, specifies that “Martin visited his new friends and stayed in their company all day. He learned and saw many things, including that the Germans had built a crematory oven in the center of Auschwitz, with a capacity of 2,000 to 3,000 people. This oven functioned day and night. A plume of black smoke and flames crowned its tall chimney 24 hours a day. Every night, trains crammed with Jews who seemed to be from Poland, arrived at the Auschwitz train station. This information was known throughout the surrounding area, because of the connections that were maintained between the deportees working in the camp, and those in outside world. Rumors circulated about the arrival of convoys, which were always at night, with women and children who were screaming and crying. These people were never seen again, neither at work nor anywhere else. These disappearances explained the constant use of the camp's gigantic crematory oven, which could not account for the number of people at the camp who died of illness or exhaustion alone. Rather, the oven worked as an instrument to systematically exterminate the Jews brought to the camp and the prisoners of Auschwitz.”

Throughout the same day that Martin spent near the Auschwitz concentration camp, he had the opportunity, on many different occasions, to approach the gate guarding the camp's entrance. Then in the evening, he left again for Breslau. Martin intended to spend a night there and take a train to Belgium the next day. But on February 10, 1943, having barely arrived in Breslau, Victor Martin was arrested by the Gestapo, following an allegation against him. His attitude had seemed suspicious to a French worker. Victor Martin was transferred to Katowice, where he was beaten, tortured, and accused by the Gestapo of being involved in the Resistance. Despite the blows, Martin denied the accusations because any admission would endanger his life.

The Gestapo believed that this was a case of industrial espionage and handed him over as a prisoner to the Abwehr¹⁵. After an investigation, Martin's interrogator, Lieutenant Becker, decided to keep him in Germany until the end of the war. Martin would work as a translator at the Radwitz "re-education" camp, where the worst punishment was inflicted on uncooperative prisoners. On April 1, 1943, Martin arrived in Radwitz and on May 15, 1943, he ran away. Having no papers, Martin risked everything. With his pay, he bought a train ticket and crossed all of Germany, dodging inspections. Arriving at the German-Belgian border, Martin crossed it on foot, near Malmédy, a Belgian town that had been annexed by the Reich. Shortly after, Victor Martin returned home to Brussels.

b) Positive Outcomes

In an emergency meeting at an apartment in the occupied Belgian capital, the leaders of the Independence Front and the Committee for the Defense of Jews listened, appalled, to the terrible testimony of Victor Martin. The worst was therefore true.

Martin wrote a summary of his report, which was passed on to all organizations that were that were linked to the Independence Front: "*We must no longer allow any Jews answer the summons which inevitably leads to the Dossin barracks in Malines, and from there on, to death. All Jews must immediately go underground with the assistance of the Belgian population.*" In October 1943, after some delay due to arrests which partially dismantled the Independence Front, the newspaper "The Torch" which acted as the voice of the Committee for the Defense of Jews, relayed the information provided by Victor Martin.

Most importantly, the rescue mission took on a new and greater scope, as a result of the work of the Perelman couple, Yvonne Jospa, and Andrée Gelen, a young Catholic teacher. The militant ardor of these admirable young women worked miracles. Through its networks and its

hiding places, its channels and its isolated farms, the work of the CDJ saved three thousand Jewish children.

As for Victor Martin, he resumed the fight in the Charleroi region,¹⁶ printing and distributing the underground press, and helping the families of political prisoners.

Unfortunately, on July 21, 1943, he was arrested after a comrade who was an exemplary resistance fighter, confessed under torture. Incarcerated and mistreated, Martin languished in Charleroi prison for five months, and then in Saint-Gilles prison for three months. On April 8, 1944, he was transferred to the Vught concentration camp in the Netherlands, from where he escaped on April 20, thanks to an astounding combination of factors, and with the assistance of the Dutch Resistance. After returning to Belgium, Martin took part in the battles for Liberation.

The rest of this story must be told. After returning home, Victor Martin re-established his connections, and starting on September 8, 1944, he published a series of articles on "Hitler's Slave Labor Camps" taken from "The Life of an Illegal".¹⁷ Then he resumed his life, where the Nazis had interrupted it in 1940. Martin left to join the Ministry of Labor in Brussels, where, within the framework of the National Employment Office (ONEM), he directed the implementation of an adult vocational training system in Belgium.

Martin's experience was greatly appreciated, and his work expanded internationally in the 1950s and 1960s. Sent by the Belgian government to the International Labor Office, a United Nations agency based in Geneva, Martin was responsible for protracted missions in Chile, Uruguay, and Cuba. Martin also worked for the OECD¹⁸ and accomplished occasional tasks in Europe and Morocco.

Married, with a son, and three grandchildren, Victor Martin never forgot Auschwitz. From time to time, he had to respond to certain questions at the requests of official organizations

inquiring about his life to award him a pension or an honor, from friends who were also involved with the Resistance and wished to procure a clarification on events, and from Belgian or foreign historians who were studying the Second World War. Martin always replied gracefully, but without ostentation. He retired in 1977 and settled in France. Martin participated in the activities of the National Federation of Deportees, Internees, Resisters and Patriots (FNDIRP)¹⁹ and went to speak in middle and high schools in the Haute-Savoie region, as part of the preparation for the National Competition on Resistance and on Deportation.

In November 1989, Victor Martin died discreetly, in the same manner that he had lived. He was remembered as an open, warm, and humane soul to all who had the privilege of knowing him.

For today's youth, and for us teachers who have the mission to educate them, Victor Martin remains an example and a lesson in civics and courage. Let us not forget Victor Martin. It is women and men of his caliber who keep our faith in humanity intact.

*-Translated from the French and annotated by Tamsin Urbas, Scripps College
Edited by Julin Everett, Scripps College.*

Notes

¹ All annotations are the original work of the translator.

² Along with Didier Roten, Bernard Krouck is the screenwriter of the film *La Mission de Victor Martin*. Les Films de la Memoire, 2000.

³ The Independence Front was a Belgian Resistance group founded in 1941. It was a faction of the larger Secret Army. Conway, Martin. *The Sorrows of Belgium: Liberation and Political Reconstruction, 1944-1947*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁴ This is a reference to the film *Schindler's List*. Steven Spielberg, a Jewish American, based his film on Thomas Keneally's 1982 book that describes the life of Oskar Schindler, German-Catholic businessman and Nazi member. WEINRAUB, BERNARD. "'Schindler's List: A Film About Heroism and the Holocaust.'" The New York Times, The New York Times, 12 Dec. 1993. archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com

⁵ Nowak was born in Warsaw in 1913. He joined an underground resistance movement in 1941. He was forced to flee Europe. He attempted to warn the US public about the atrocities of the Holocaust, but he was not taken seriously. Goldman, Randy. "Oral History Interview with Jan Nowak." The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 21 Feb. 1995, Accessed 10 May 2024.

⁶ Belgium is known as "the flat country".

⁷ The Popular Front was a coalition of working-class resistant groups united against Facism. Notably, this included campaigns against the Soviet Union and the Spanish government before World War II (1936-1938). Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Popular Front". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 26 Jan. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed 11 May 2024.

⁸ The German-Soviet Pact was an agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. It designated areas of Eastern Europe for each empire to control. It included a ten-year peace agreement between the two countries, which the Nazis broke after two years. "GERMAN-SOVIET PACT." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, encyclopedia.ushmm.org. Accessed 10 May 2024.

⁹ *Main Kampf* was the only book ever written by Adolf Hitler. It served as the core of Nazi ideology. One of the main themes is the preservation, and domination of the Aryan race, or the "race of masters". Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Mein Kampf". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2 May. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed 11 May 2024.

¹⁰ Adolf Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* while imprisoned for the failed coup that he led in 1923 as the head of the burgeoning Nazi party.

¹¹ Industrial espionage is the theft of trade clandestine trade tactics from business competitors. Often, foreign state powers are involved in industrial espionage. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Industrial espionage". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 6 Jun. 2016, <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed 11 May 2024.

¹² The Po'alei Zion mutual fund emerges out of a Jewish proletariat movement stretching back to the 19th century. It was created by merging ideologies of Jewish nationalism or Zionism with Socialism. Kolatt, Israel. "Zionism: Po'alei Zion." Po'alei Zion, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org. Accessed 10 May 2024.

¹³ The Association of Belgian Jews (ABJ) was a Jewish association created by the occupying Nazi government and forced onto Belgian Jews during World War II. This organization attempted to maintain the guise that it was looking after the Belgian Jewish community by putting on events and organizing "community activities". In reality, it was a method to track and register Belgian Jews for forced labor and deportations. "Association of Jews in Belgium." Shoah Resource Center, Yad Vashem, www.yadvashem.org. Accessed 10 May 2024.

¹⁴ Firminy is a town in the Loire region of France. It is located in the South-East Central region. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Firminy". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 7 Jun. 2017, <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed 11 May 2024.

¹⁵ The Abwehr was a German intelligence organization that functioned from 1921 to 1944. "The Nazi Party: The Abwehr." The Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org. Accessed 10 May 2024.

¹⁶ Charleroi is a municipality in the Walloon region. It is located in South-Central Belgium. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Charleroi". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 26 Nov. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com>. Accessed 11 May 2024.

¹⁷ Originally published in *L'Indépendance*, 19 September 1944, p.1

¹⁸ The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development is an international state-sponsored program that aims to bring policy changes to increase living standards around the world. About the OECD - OECD, www.oecd.org/about/. Accessed 10 May 2024.

¹⁹ The National Federation of Resistant, Patriots, Deported and Interned (Fédération Nationale des Déportés et Internés, Résistants et Patriotes) is an organization created to remember the atrocities of the Holocaust. Created in 1945, directly after Liberation, today this organization hosts a large variety of social, medical, legal, and remembrance activities, including the National Competition for Resistance and Deportation. "Fédération Nationale Des Déportés et Internés, Résistants et Patriotes." European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions/fr-002381. Accessed 10 May 2024.