

CONSEIL REPRESENTATIF DES JUIFS DE FRANCE

(Representative Council of French Jews; CRIF), An umbrella organization of French Jewish societies, founded in January 1944. CRIF's foundation ended the long-standing divisions in France between French-born and immigrant Jewish associations, which were motivated by two factors: the fate of the remaining Jews, and postwar considerations. Joseph Fisher (later Ariel), president of the Zionist Federation, was instrumental in its establishment. From mid-1943 Fisher pursued a policy of unification, and by August 1943 he had succeeded in uniting the immigrant organizations into the *Comite General de Defense* (CGD). Fisher pursued, however, a much broader objective: the unification of the immigrant organizations and the *consistoire central des israelites de france* (CC), the representatives of French Judaism. The divisions by then were more superficial than real. Previous political obstacles, the evaluation of Vichy's policy, and the CC's perception of its role, which had hindered French Jewry's unity, were overcome.

The CC and the CGD entered into negotiations in December 1943, and by early 1944 the broad principles of the CRIF were accepted. Shortly thereafter, debates developed concerning its charter. They ranged over three issues: the closure of the *union generale des israelites de france* (General Council of French Jews; UGIF); resistance; and postwar policy on the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Questions of resistance and the UGIF were partly resolved. Divergences developed over the issue of Palestine. Communists and Bundists demanded a binational home, and the CC was concerned about the implications of too firm a commitment. A general consensus, however, overrode the differences. The CRIF was formed, with Leon Meiss as president. At liberation, it represented all the political tendencies and organizations, and it was able to act on behalf of a united community and to present the Jewish case to the provisional government.