

## French Jewish Scouts

(*Eclaireurs Israelites de France*, EIF), French Jewish scouting movement, created by Robert Gamzon in 1923, which rescued thousands of Jews in France during World War II.

Soon after war broke out in September 1939, the EIF established several children's homes in southwest France. After France fell to the German army in mid-1940, the EIF moved south to the unoccupied zone of France while still continuing to function illegally in Paris. Its children's homes soon began to take in the children of Jews imprisoned in Nazi camps.

In 1941 the EIF was forced to join the Union of French Jews (UGIF), the organization established by the Vichy government to consolidate all French Jewish organizations into one unit. However, the EIF's status was improved when Gamzon was appointed to the UGIF's administration and the EIF became the UGIF's young people's department.

The Germans began deporting the Jews of France in March 1942. That summer the EIF established a social service that evolved into a rescue organization; it supplied Jewish children with forged identity papers, placed them in safe homes, or moved them out of France. During the winter of 1943 the EIF set up an underground fighting group, which participated in the liberation of southwest France. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)