

Georges Loinger, a savior's story



Georges Loinger was born in Strasburg, in 1910, into a Jewish family.

In 1940, he was made prisoner with his unit and interned in Germany. He managed to escape from the prisoners' camp and returned to France, to join his wife Flore, who was in charge of the La Gnette children's home, hosting 125 Jewish children from Germany and Austria, who had sought refuge in France shortly before the war.

At the end of 1941, the situation of the Gnette children becoming too dangerous, Georges Loinger confided them to OSE. At this same period, he met with Dr Joseph Weill, who offered to hire him as an itinerant educator for the children's homes located in the free zone, where over 1500 children were living by then.

Georges Loinger offered the children a broad range of sports activities. Later on, once the homes had turned into lethal traps, what had started as a game became a physical training for crossing borders.

At the end of 1942, a meeting attended by the leaders of OSE was held in Lyon. Joseph Weill suggested dissolve the children's homes and scatter the children within foster families or Christian and secular institutions.

Georges Garel, a French resistant, instructed Georges Loinger to organize a channel of border crossing to Switzerland for several hundreds of Jewish children.

After the war, Georges Loinger opened an accommodation center for war prisoners and deportees. He also helped Holocaust survivors emigrate to Palestine and played a major part in preparing the crossing of the Exodus. All the while maintaining his implication towards Israel, Georges Loinger became the director of the French branch of the Israeli national sailing company, ZIM.

Georges Loinger was named Commander of the Military Legion of Honor. He was awarded the Medal of the Resistance, the Military Cross, the Gold medal of the National Education, Youth and Sports Ministry.