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Two Belgium Boys, Once Refugees From the Nazis

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Press-Scimitar Staff Writer

Two boys from Belgium are having a happy reunion in Memphis.

They are Jackie Girard, who arrived in Memphis yesterday, and George Zwiz, CBC student who is making his home with Mr. and Mrs. Abe D. Waldauer, 647 West Drive.

The two Belgian-born Jewish boys were close friends in Europe. Both had harrowing experiences, dodging Nazi patrols after Belgium was over-run. They had not seen each other in seven months, until Jackie went to CBC yesterday afternoon to surprise George.

It was thru the efforts of a Catholic priest in Belgium, a Protestant congressman and a Jewish lawyer that both boys have been brought to the land of their dreams—the United States.

Rep. Cliff Davis met both boys when they were staying with Father Andre, the priest, in Namur, Belgium. Mr. Davis was impressed with the boys, promised to help get them to the United States.

Mr. Davis told Mr. Waldauer, the lawyer, about the boys. Last Aug. 23, George, who then could speak

English only haltingly, came, and has been living with the Waldauers since, attending CBC. George, 16, now speaks good English.

It was harder to get Jackie, who was 13 on Feb. 16, to America, but Davis and Waldauer didn't stop until they got a visa for him.

Jackie, who speaks excellent English, having learned it by sitting thru American movies repeatedly and studying the language and sub-titles, is now ready to make a new start, in Memphis or California, and forget the nightmare of Nazism.

Jackie's aunt, Mrs. Sarah Helzman, of Los Angeles, his mother's sister, met the USS Marine Tiger when the boy arrived in New York after a 13-day crossing. They are now at the Waldauers, and Jackie will visit in Los Angeles, but may return to Memphis.

Today Jackie told of some of his experiences after the Germans marched into Belgium. His sister and her husband, married only four weeks, were caught and taken to a gas chamber.

"The Nazis told Jewish people they wanted to put them to work," Jackie said. "They fooled a number of them. They went off in trucks singing, but they never returned.

My parents, another sister, self escaped."

Jackie told of running from the Nazis, of being hidden by a teacher, and making his way to a village near the Dutch border lived with a peasant family, came a farmer, always in fear of being found by Nazi patrols.

Finally, came liberation and he went to stay with Father Andre who had helped so many people to escape the Germans. There he met George, and they became friends. Mr. Davis came with Congressional committee, and took a fancy to the two boys, agreed to help them.

Tho Jackie had an aunt in Los Angeles, it took longer to get him out of Belgium. The parents of Jackie and George are living in Belgium, and became good friends because of the boys.

When arrangements were made for Jackie to come to Memphis, Mr. and Mrs. Zwiz wanted to send something to George. Jackie told them that he probably had everything in a material way in Memphis, suggested that they make a recording of their voice.

So Jackie brought a gift from George's parents, whom he hasn't seen in seven months—their voices. Mr. and Mrs. Zwiz gave their son



—Press-Scimitar Staff Photo
REUNION — George (left) and Jackie.