

Paris

Capital of France and in 1939, home to 200,000 Jews. Most of those were Eastern Europeans immigrants who had recently moved to France. In all, about 50,000 Parisian Jews died in the Holocaust.

Germany invaded France in May 1940. By June, France had surrendered and signed a truce agreement. Paris then became the capital of German-occupied France. At that time, hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen who had fled southward returned to the occupied zone. Among those were about 20,000-30,000 Jews. Jewish life began to be revived, despite the fact that much Jewish property was confiscated and Jews suffered many restrictions.

Many Jewish organizations were revitalized or established in the summer of 1940. The Jewish Communists of Paris formed an underground resistance organization called *Solidarite* (meaning Solidarity). Groups of Zionists, Jewish-Socialists (Bundists), and immigrant community activists got together to institute the Amelot Committee. The Central Consistory of the Jews of France reopened its synagogues, and other French-Jewish associations opened their doors, as well. In September 1940 there were 150,000 Jews in Paris.

However, in October of that year, the Vichy government began to pass anti-Jewish laws. Also at that time, the Nazis' "Jewish expert" in Paris, Theodor Dannecker, began to pressure the Jews to organize all Jewish organizations under one umbrella agency. Thus, in January 1941, the Coordinating Committee of Jewish Welfare Societies (*Comite de Coordination des Oeuvres Israelites de Bienfaisance*, CC) was formed. Dannecker appointed two men from Vienna to run the CC; the Jews struggled to keep a hand in controlling the Jewish organization.

In May 1941 Dannecker called for the first group of Jews to be arrested; 3,700 Jewish men were sent to French internment camps. The CC refused to hand over 6,000 Jewish men for forced labor, so Dannecker ordered the imprisonment of 4,300 French and immigrant Jews in the Concentration Camp located in the northeastern Paris suburb of Drancy.

Seven synagogues were bombed in October 1941 and the Jews were ordered to turn in their bicycles, telephones, and radios. The Nazis responded to

French resistance activities in December 1941 by punishing the Jews: they were fined one billion francs, and 750 French Jews were arrested. A new Jewish umbrella organization, the Union of French Jews, which had been established by the Vichy government in November, was made responsible to pay the huge fine. By the end of 1941 Jews were forbidden to leave Paris or change their address.

January 1942 opened with a law that forbid Jews from being outside their homes at night. In March the first group of Jews was deported, and in June all Jews over the age of six living in the occupied zone were ordered to wear a yellow star of David marked with the word "Juif," meaning Jew.

At the beginning of July 1942 Adolf Eichmann visited Paris to make final decisions regarding a major Deportation of Jews. On July 16 some 12,000 foreign Jews were arrested and brought to the *Velodrome d'Hiver* sports stadium, from where they were to be taken to Drancy, and then on to Auschwitz. About 15,000 others had escaped arrest by fleeing to the Vichy zone, hiding, or procuring a special protective identity card.

By early 1943, 30,000 Jews had been deported and thousands of others had gone into hiding or escaped. There were only 60,000 known Jews left in Paris. The Germans began to have troubling feeding their insatiable desire to deport Jews; they thus began arresting Jews living in children's homes, old-age homes, and the Jewish hospital. Soon, even Jews born of mixed marriages were arrested. By early 1944 less than 15,000 Jews still lived openly in Paris, and the Germans were rounding up anyone they could find. Deportations continued until Paris was liberated on August 25, 1944. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)