



Drancy

Located in a northeastern suburb of Paris, Drancy functioned as an assembly and detention camp for French Jews. From Drancy, they were sent to forced labor and extermination camps. Established in August 1941 and liberated in August 1944, the camp held 4,500 inmates at a time. In total, approximately 70,000 prisoners passed through Drancy.

The camp functioned like a Nazi Concentration Camp, despite being managed by the French – under supervision of the German Security Police and Security Service - until July 1, 1943. Food rations were small, but the prisoners were aided by the Red Cross and French Jewish organizations. On July 2 Alois Brunner, an SS officer, took over the camp. Under his administration, the inmates' conditions declined rapidly and deportations to Auschwitz increased. From June 1942 to July 1944, 64 transports with 61,000 French, Polish, and German Jews left Drancy – 61 for Auschwitz and 3 for Sobibor.

In spite of the terrible conditions at Drancy, cultural and religious life endured. The Jewish High Holidays were observed in a synagogue that was established in 1941, and many prisoners attended Sabbath services regularly despite German prohibitions. A school was instituted, books were brought into the camp, and cultural evenings were conducted.

Drancy was liberated on August 17, 1944, after the Allies reached Paris.