

## MECHELEN

(in French, Malines), city in Belgium located halfway between Antwerp and Brussels, and site of an assembly camp for Belgian Jews from which they were deported to the east. During the summer of 1942 the German occupation authorities took over barracks in Mechelen's old city and turned them into an assembly camp. As railroad tracks led right up to the camp, Mechelen was a convenient spot for an assembly point for Deportations.

Beginning on July 25, 1942 some 200 Jews arrived at Mechelen per day. These Jews were divided into groups, including Jews who were deported as soon as possible; Jews coming from neutral countries or countries that were allied with Germany, who were not always deported; Jews married to non-Jews or half-Jews, who were sent on to the Drancy camp in France; and those considered politically "dangerous," who were transferred to prison. Later on, groups of Gypsies were also brought to the camp.

From August 1942 two transports of Jews, each carrying 1,000 people, departed the camp each week. During 1943 the rate of deportation was somewhat slower. By July 1944, however, 25,257 Jews had left Mechelen for the east on 28 trains. Most were taken to their deaths at Auschwitz.