

Historical Context

At the onset of the German Occupation of France in June 1940, the Jewish population in metropolitan France was composed of approximately **330,000** individuals. Two distinct groups comprised this population; **200,000 individuals were French citizens, while the remaining 130,000 were foreigners fleeing their home countries.** These foreigners immigrated mainly from Russia, Romania, Poland, and the Mediterranean coastal states in the earlier waves of immigration, and from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in the later immigration waves. Of the 200,000 Jews holding French citizenship, half had been residing in France for multiple generations, and were classified as *les Israélites*. The other half included naturalized immigrants and their native-born children.

Under the collaboration of France's Vichy government with the Nazi regime during World War II, it is estimated that **75,721 Jews were deported from France. Approximately 11,000 were children, 2,000 of whom were less than 6 years old. Only 2,564 individuals, or 3% of deportees from France, survived the war and returned from the camps.** Although France represents one of countries with the highest survival rates of Jews during the Holocaust, it is nonetheless important to remember the lives of the individuals who were deported to concentration camps and murdered as a direct result of the collaboration of France's Vichy government with the Nazi regime.

Following the liberation of the camps, French deportees returning "home" were subjected to harsh realities in numerous regards. Upon their return, many Jews discovered that their apartments, businesses, and possessions had been expropriated by the Nazis or sold to non-Jewish French civilians. Not only were the deportees forced to grapple with the immense psychological trauma resulting from their grueling experiences in the camps and the loss of their loved ones, but in addition, many of them were now left with no choice other than to rebuild their lives from the ground up, with absolutely nothing in hand. The Holocaust survivors' ability to reconstruct their lives under such unimaginable circumstances serves as the ultimate representation of determination and resilience in the face of adversity.

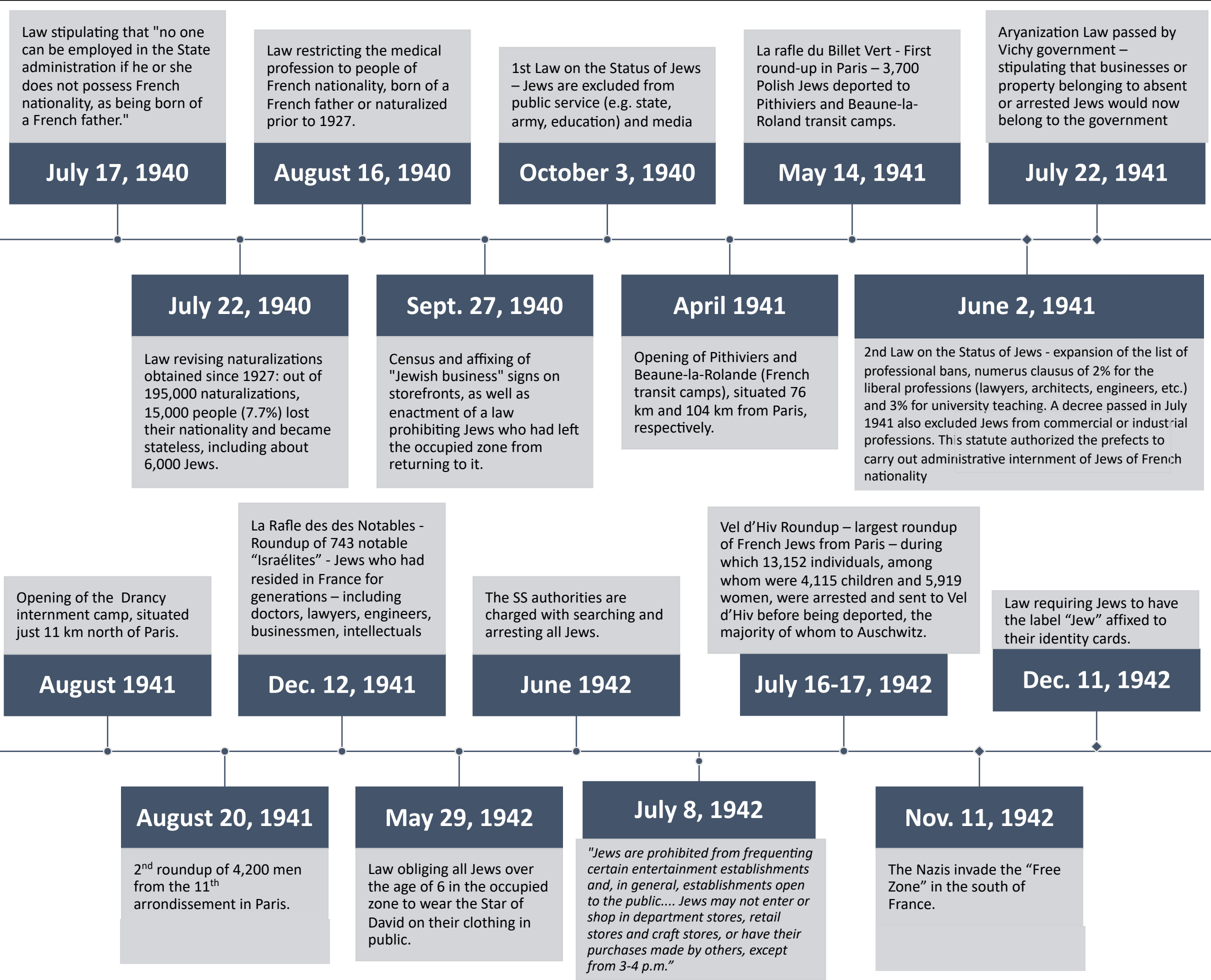
Significance

- It was only in 1995 that French President Jacques Chirac acknowledged France's responsibility in the deportation of Jews to concentration camps during the Holocaust.
- According to a study conducted by the Claims Conference in 2020, 25% of French adults aged 18-39 surveyed had never seen or heard the word *Shoah* (Holocaust).
- Another 2020 study by the Claims Conference revealed that 63% of Americans aged 18-39 surveyed did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.
- Antisemitic acts have been rising in France (and globally)
- The number of living Holocaust survivors is dwindling each day. Now more than ever, it is critical that we shed light on the significance of first-person accounts of the Holocaust and ensure that they are being transmitted to future generations, so that history does not repeat itself.



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Timeline of Key Events



From Liberation to Post-War Period



Holocaust Remembrance



Survivor Testimonies

« C'est pour eux que je témoigne. Pour pas qu'on les oublie... qui aurait pu être là... qui sont morts... qui ont été assassinés... tout ça parce qu'ils sont juifs. » (Arlette Testyler, 8 septembre 2022).

"It's for them that I testify. So that we don't forget them... those who could have been here... who died... who were assassinated... all because they were Jewish." (Arlette Testyler, September 8, 2022).

« On ne voulait pas nous entendre. On ne voulait pas nous écouter parler. En France c'était très dur. » (Arlette Testyler, 8 septembre 2022)

"No one wanted to hear us. No one wanted to listen to us speak. In France it was very hard." (Arlette Testyler, September 8, 2022)



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