

Office for Jewish Affairs

(*Commissariat General Aux Questions Juives*), agency established by the collaborating Vichy government on March 29, 1941 to coordinate France's anti-Jewish policies and prepare and carry out anti-Jewish legislation.

The *Commissariat* was founded when the Vichy government heard that the Nazis intended to set up an office for Jewish affairs in Paris; the French did not want to lose control of this area, so they offered to set up their own. The first director of the *Commissariat* was the antisemitic Xavier Vallat.

Vallat sought to consolidate the anti-Jewish activities of both the occupied and unoccupied (Vichy) zones of France. On June 2, 1941 he issued a new *Statut Des Juifs* in order to tighten the decrees set forth in the first one. He also announced a census of all the Jews in the Vichy (unoccupied) zone. This census, which shocked French Jewry, later facilitated the deportation. The *Commissariat* confiscated Jewish property, and tried to sell all Jewish holdings - the money earned intended for France.

In May 1942 Vallat was replaced by Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, an ardent pro-Nazi. He instituted a police-like organization to carry out acts of repression, and cooperated fully with the Nazis during the roundups of summer 1942. From late 1943 he was replaced by Charles Mercier du Paty de Clam who was able to somewhat reverse the office's antisemitic direction. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)