

DEADLY CENSUS

Over 10 days in April 1944, Admiral Nicholas Horthy's pro-German Hungarian government conducted the most complete census of any Jewish community in Hitler's Europe. Although the Germans had occupied Hungary the previous month, deportations to Auschwitz had not yet begun. The Jews cooperated eagerly on the assumption that those on the lists would be protected. Parents rushed to register newborn children.

The gendarmerie collected the names and other particulars of about 1 million Jews, half-Jews and baptized Jews in Hungary and territories under Hungarian administration. The Nazis and their Hungarian allies, aided by the census, slaughtered up to 400,000 of those on the rolls in the last nine months of World War II. From 1945 until the collapse of Hungary's Communist regime, the census papers were stored under lock and key in the secret police archive in Budapest.

Now the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center and the Association for Research on Hungarian-Speaking Jewry have published the first of a projected 40-volume edition of 1 million names, complete with birth dates, mother's names (Hungarians, like Jews, put more trust in maternity), married women's maiden names, and 1944 addresses. The first volume

contains 6,000 entries from Hajdu county out of a total of 25,000 in the sixth of wartime Hungary's 10 police districts.

The material was given to the association by the World Jewish Congress, which had obtained the files from unidentified sources within Hungary.

Israel is pressing Prime Minister Jozsef Antall's conservative government to release the rest of the files. President Chaim Herzog raised the matter during his state visit in mid-June, but the Hungarians are still touchy about anything connected with the former secret police. Researchers hope Interior Minister Peter Boross will be more forthcoming when he visits Jerusalem in September.

The project, funded by the Beate and Serge Klarsfeld Foundation and private donors, is expected to cost \$500,000. It is edited by Dr. Gavriel Bar-Shaked, a 45-year-old Hungarian Jewish historian whose father survived a Nazi forced labor battalion. Bar-Shaked moved to Israel in 1980.

The initial volumes will not record the fate of the named Jews, but Bar-Shaked says that will be incorporated in a computerized version. The object of the exercise is twofold: a memorial to the Jews of Hungary and a "family tree" data base for their descendants. All information, including the book, is free. The research association, which has already spent 550,000 setting up the project, is a non-profit organization and is not allowed to charge for its services.

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