

# Jewish groups demand inquiry into long-lost French police files

PARIS (AP) - Two Jewish groups yesterday demanded an investigation of the long-lost files of Paris Jews compiled by French police in 1940 and later used to conduct mass roundups.

As reported yesterday, Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld announced Tuesday that he had found the files while conducting research at the archives of the Ministry for Veterans Affairs. Their whereabouts had been a mystery since the end of World War II.

Judge Jean-Pierre Getti, currently investigating two cases involving crimes against humanity, ordered the files placed under court jurisdiction.

The discovery made headlines around France, which is still struggling to come to terms with its collaborationist past.

"The Files of Shame," as *Le Figaro* called them, are color-coded in white, blue and orange, depending on the nationality of each person. They contain the names and particulars of some 140,000 people.

Historians have long known of their existence, but not their whereabouts. Some government officials maintained the files were destroyed after the liberation of Paris in 1944.

"There is good reason to open a

thorough investigation to find out why these files have been deliberately hidden for decades," Jean Kahn, president of the Representative Council of Jewish Organizations, said in a radio interview.

"By saying these files no longer existed, the authorities committed a serious mistake. So an investigation is necessary to find out why they were covered up and to condemn the guilty parties."

*Le Monde*, inquiring about the files several weeks ago, said the Veterans Affairs Ministry firmly denied they were located in its archives.

The Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation requested custody of the files, calling them "sacred for all Judaism."

Compiled in October 1940 by police of the collaborationist Vichy regime, the files were the first and most complete of numerous wartime files on French Jews. Police used the files to identify and round up Jews in Paris,

Klarsfeld said only one in 10 Jews refused to participate in the police census.

"We were a little afraid to report to the police station, but we were mostly afraid of being illegal. We

had no idea what it would lead to," said Fanny Ewencyk, who was 18 at the time.

Ewencyk, her mother and sister, were scheduled to be deported in July 1942, but a friend working in the local police station warned them the night before.

"The policeman came over and told us to leave immediately. He said our names were on the list for next day's sweep," she said.

Klarsfeld said he suspected official foot-dragging regarding the files, which provide information on the role of French police in the deportation and death of some 75,000 French Jews.

Veterans Affairs Minister Louis Mexandeau denied the accusation, saying a copy of the files had been delivered to the National Archives in January 1991.

He said the files had been used solely for the purpose of "establishing the rights of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution."

The census was conducted under the supervision of Theo Dannecker, chief of Jewish Affairs section of the Gestapo in France, and General de La Laurencie, Vichy's representative in Paris.