

## Horthy, Miklos

(1868--1957), Leader of Hungary from 1920 to 1944. During World War I, Horthy served in the Austro-Hungarian navy. In 1920 he took control of the Hungarian government and adopted the title "regent." Horthy's government was antisemitic and invoked a *Numerus Clausus* (quota) law of September 1920, which restricted the number of Jews who could attend university. In fact, Hungary was the first government in post-World War I Europe to issue such a restriction.

Hungary allied itself with Germany and Italy. In 1938 Horthy began instituting further anti-Jewish legislation. However, in 1941 and 1942 Horthy refused to succumb to Hitler, who demanded that Horthy introduce even harsher measures, such as excluding Jews from Hungary's economic realm; forcing the Jews to wear the Jewish badge (see also Badge, Jewish); constructing ghettos; and deporting Jews to concentration and extermination camps. Throughout 1943 and 1944 Horthy sought to leave his alliance with Germany. As a result, on March 18, 1944, Hitler sent for Horthy. Hitler warned him that German troops were going to invade Hungary the very next day. Horthy immediately gave in—he accepted the installation of a pro-Nazi government with complete power to institute and carry out anti-Jewish measures, and agreed to deport the Jews.

Just four months later, Horthy changed his mind again. Under pressure from Western governments, the Red Cross, the king of Sweden, and the Vatican, Horthy stopped the deportations, and even proposed that a certain number of Hungarian Jews be allowed to leave Hungary for Palestine (see also Horthy Offer). At the end of August Horthy appointed a prime minister who re-initiated attempts to get Hungary out of the war. However, the Nazis tried to thwart Horthy's plans in October, when they kidnapped Horthy's son as a pawn. The Germans immediately deposed him and put him in jail. In his place, they appointed Ferenc Szalasi, who completely cooperated with the Nazis.

After the war the Allies refused to surrender Horthy to the Hungarians. Instead, they let him move to Portugal. There he wrote his memoirs.