

# Documenting the fate of Rumanian Jewry

By **ERNIE MEYER**  
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About half of Rumania's 800,000 Jews perished during the Holocaust. The 400,000 who survived did so partly because of courageous Jewish leadership. These leaders, chiefly Dr. Wilhelm Filderman and Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran, played successfully on the tepid loyalty of the Rumanians to the Nazis, especially after the German defeat at Stalingrad, when it became possible to imagine the Germans losing the war. In the literature of the Holocaust, however, the fate of Rumanian Jewry has not received much attention.

This relative neglect has now been partly corrected with the publication of 10 volumes of documents on the period, 80 per cent of which have never appeared in print before.

The monumental 7,000-page work was shown to the press this week by MK Yitzhak Arzi, who lived through the period and is now president of the Commission for Research on the Holocaust of Rumanian Jewry.

Serge Klarsfeld, who came from Paris for the occasion, financed the work through the Beate Klarsfeld Foundation. Klarsfeld's father, a native of Rumania, was deported from France.

"In today's climate of revisionism we not only have to tell the story of the Holocaust, we also must prove it by publishing facsimile documents," Klarsfeld said. The work is aimed at historians, rather than the general public. "Researchers can't be expected to travel from New York to Bucharest to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem for their documentation - we do the work for them," he explained.

The original plan called for four volumes, but the number grew to 10 as more and more documents came to light. Most of the letters, telegrams and official memos are in Rumanian, although there are many in German, and some in French and even in English.

An additional volume still to be published will be a summary of the

entire work in English.

Although Klarsfeld did some of the research, the bulk of the work was done by historian Jean Ancel, 51, of Yad Vashem. "It was lucky that about five years ago I met up with Serge Klarsfeld," he told the press conference. For seven years before that Ancel had done research on the fate of the Jews of his native country, which he left at the age of five.

He said that the Rumanian government supplied him with many documents from archives normally closed to outsiders. "I also received important help from Rumanian historians, which is a fairly new departure," Ancel said in his modest way. "One day I hope to gain access to the files of the Rumanian secret police."