

**Henriette Asséo, Annie Bellaïche-Cohen, Muriel Flicoteaux, Corry Guttstadt, Xavier Rothéa, Sabi Soulam, and Alain de Tolédo (eds.).** *Muestros Dezaparesidos. Mémorial des Judéo-Espagnols Déportés de France.* Paris: Muestros Dezaparesidos. 2019. 719 pages. ISBN-13: 9782956049715.

Reviewed by **Günce Akpamuk**  
Université Lumière Lyon 2, France  
Gunce.Akpamuk@univ-lyon2.fr

During the Second World War, 75,000 people were deported from France to concentration camps. More than 5,000 of these were Judeo-Spanish people, who had emigrated from former territories of the Ottoman Empire, where their ancestors had taken refuge after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The community of about 35,000 Judeo-Spanish in France, which was created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, included people from Turkey, the Balkan countries, and the Near and Middle East, and represented various nationalities – French, Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian.

*Mémorial des Judéo-Espagnols Déportés de France* ('Memorial of the Deported Judeo-Spanish from France') focuses on the Judeo-Spanish community during World War II, one of the unexplored parts of the history of the Holocaust in France. This memorial, based on original archival documents such as lists and files from the Drancy camp, testimonies, and biographies, is a result of more than ten years' work carried out by volunteers, researchers, and historians. For the first time, the book compiled a list of 5,300 deportees from France, including the memoirs of more than 80 exiles, written in French and Djudezmo, a language which has been preserved for more than 5,000 years. The Muestros Dezaparesidos Association was founded in 2010 by seven Judeo-Spanish organisations in order to fight against the extinction of their language and their traditions. This book is the first step of their project, which aims to bring together elements of Judeo-Spanish history during the Holocaust in France.

The book begins with a foreword written by Serge Klarsfeld, one of the most important names in French Holocaust history. Klarsfeld thanks Alain de Tolédo and his co-workers for taking the initiative to create this reference book, which retraces an unknown part of the Holocaust history by touching on the policies of the belligerent and neutral countries towards their Jewish citizens in France. In the introduction, the editorial board explains how they define the universe of Judeo-Spanish people historically, geographically, and culturally to determine their identity. Following this, Marcel Cohen reminds us, in French and in Judeo-Spanish, of the tragedy of Jews from Thessalonica.

The territories of the Ottoman Empire, especially those in the Balkans, underwent a drastic transformation at the end of the nineteenth century. Some, such as Romania, Montenegro, and Serbia, became independent after 1878, and others were annexed to other countries, such as Cyprus, which became a British protectorate. These

transformations, which brought about new dimensions to the socio-economic life of the Judeo-Spanish community, are presented in two maps, which illustrate the territories of the Ottoman Empire around 1900. They include the original places of the Sephardic world around the Aegean Sea, together with an index of city names that specify the ancient, present, and country names in which they are located (pp. 22–23). These maps give a sense of historical background to the next two sections of the book. The first section, ‘A History between Radiation and Tragedy’ (pp. 25–355), is divided into five chapters with contextualisation articles that cover the history of the Judeo-Spanish community from the last days of the Ottoman Empire to the end of the Second World War. The second section, ‘Deportation’ (pp. 357–657), starts with a list of Judeo-Spanish deportees, presenting the following details: their surname, maiden name, and forename; their date and place of birth; their nationality; their last known-address; the internment camp to which they were sent; and whether or not they survived. This list is an essential source of detailed evidence for every Judeo-Spanish individual or family deported from France during the Holocaust. The following pages present additional lists of those who died in French camps, together with those who were executed by firing squads. Furthermore, this section includes articles on deportations to the concentration camp in Alderney, in the Channel Islands; the Judeo-Spanish community in North Africa; and Romaniote Jews. The next two chapters comprise individual and family stories, testimonies, and annexes.

In three articles in chapter one, ‘The Judeo-Spanish Worlds Between Empires and Nations’, Henriette Asséo provides a brief history of the Judeo-Spanish people (their community in the Ottoman territories and their successors, and the independent states of the Balkans) by illustrating the previous and post-World War I conflicts. She thoroughly explores the exceptional character of Salonika, known as the ‘Jerusalem of the Balkans’, with its strategic geography and cosmopolitan culture, and complements this with a range of photos and publications from the period. Asséo also examines the education, business, language, and cultural life of this community.

Chapter two, ‘French Illusions and Disillusions’, involves six articles. Firstly, Xavier Rothéa examines the installation of Judeo-Spanish communities in France by discussing the diversity of their economic condition and background while adapting to a new country, and their socio-economic life in different French cities. Annie Bellaïche-Cohen extends this work using archival materials and testimonies concerning the raids on, and arrests of, Judeo-Spanish people in France. She details the economic lives of the largest Judeo-Spanish communities in France, including the district of *La Roquette* in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, which was called ‘Little Turkey’ at the time, *Opéra* in Marseille, and *St-Charles* in Nîmes. From this, we see that the Jews began to use French versions of their names (either out of administrative obligation or of their own accord); became French citizens; and even enlisted, voluntarily, in the French army in the 1920s and 1930s. After the French armistice in World War II, metropolitan France was divided into two major zones, one under the Vichy government’s authority and another under German authority. In both zones, anti-Jewish legislation subsequently began to be applied in 1940, as can be seen from the census of Jews, where identity cards were marked with the stamp ‘Jew’; in the confiscation of

Jewish enterprises; in the professional ban in all sectors; and in the compulsory wearing of the yellow star. Cohen describes in detail how the Judeo-Spanish people were influenced by the exclusion and persecution policies of the German authorities and the Vichy regime during the occupation, through mass arrests all around France and deportations to the East. She also shows how the anti-Jewish applications differ from one nationality to another. The citizens of neutral countries and allies of Germany, for example, received better treatment. The testimonies of arrestees and survivors, particularly in relation to their living conditions at the Drancy camp, support the geographical and chronological context of this chapter.

In the original deportation lists or internment sheets, the nationalities of people who were born in the Ottoman territories, such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Salonika, were not only listed as 'Turkish' or 'Greek', they were also listed as 'indeterminate Turkish', 'undetermined', 'stateless', or 'unrecognized Turkish'. Sometimes the nationality of the deportees was not specified. Chapter three, 'The Question of Nationality and the Politics of Neutral Countries', outlined by Corry Guttstadt in three articles, concentrates on the significance of nationality during arrest or/and deportation, because nationals of neutral countries had a chance to be saved by the initiatives of their governments. As a specialist of Turkish Jews in the European countries, Guttstadt describes these efforts of diplomats to protect their citizens and the reaction of the German and French authorities. She also writes about the measures taken, for example by the Turkish government, to prevent the mass migration of Jews back to their own countries. With the testimonies, photos, letters between the victims and the authorities, she also discloses the repatriation of the Turks, Spaniards, Italians, and Portuguese after the German ultimatum at the end of 1942. These pages highlight once more how Turkey could have arranged transportation to save hundreds more of its citizens from early 1943. Nevertheless, the first convoy arranged from France to Turkey departed only in February 1944.

Muriel Flicoteaux and Sabi Soulam have contributed three articles for the fourth chapter, which explores the engagement of Judeo-Spanish in the *Résistance*. They show the voluntary integration of the Sephardim into the French army in 1939, in order to fight against Germany, their demobilisation after the armistice, their internment, and their deportation. This chapter introduces us to the commitment made by young people in different political and community spaces, and to resistance movements against the occupier and Vichy. It provides numerous memoirs and excerpts from the biographies of those who fought and those who helped them. 'The Day of War', the last chapter of the first part of the book, is written by Annie Bellaïche-Cohen and Xavier Rothéa. In their words, 'liberation is not the end of the history of deportation'. The authors expose the return of the deportees after liberation, by their own means or with the assistance of the Allies, the conditions of transit and quarantine in repatriation centres, the waiting of families, and the gradual physical and psychological reconstruction.

The second part of the volume, 'Deportations', gives the reader some insight into the project and the rationale for this book. The list of Judeo-Spanish deported from France was compiled by examining all the people in Serge Klarsfeld's *Memorial*. A

complete reading of the Drancy files from the *Mémorial de la Shoah*, family archives, and documents of the departmental archives and *Yad Vashem* helped to determine the addresses and nationalities of family members.

Overall, this volume with its distinct sections, its well-written articles, its detailed lists, testimonies, and bibliography, opens up a new window in academic research and teaching leads on the Holocaust in France, by disclosing an undiscovered part of history. It also creates a memorial to the murdered Judeo-Spanish women, men, and children. As a researcher on Turkish Jews living in France during the Holocaust, I found that the testimonies and articles in this book, which are based largely on archival documents, provided me with invaluable help for my studies. Furthermore, I constantly use the alphabetical list to check names, addresses, and family members. The volume instantly became a solid reference for Holocaust Studies. It is not the first time we have seen the lists of deportations from France: we even have online archives, such as *Yad Vashem*, *Mémorial de la Shoah Paris*, and *stevemorse.org*, which is based on Klarsfeld's *Memorial*. However, as observed in the introduction, this book not only singles out a community, but it gives the whole deportation history its due. It also helps in some way to restore the destroyed lives and the social and cultural universe of the Judeo-Spanish people, all of which makes this book an indispensable resource.