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Since the publication of Stanford Shaw’s *Turkey and the Holocaust: Turkey’s Role in Rescuing Turkish and European Jewry from Nazi Persecution, 1933–1945* (1993), many have come to believe that Turkish diplomats, at the risk of their own lives and on orders from Ankara, regularly intervened to save European and Turkish Jews. The most dramatic example of this effort, narrated for the first time in Shaw’s study, is the account of “the Turkish Schindler” Necdet Kent, Consul at Marseille, who allegedly jumped into a cattle car full of Turkish Jews destined for a concentration camp, thus forcing the Germans to release them. The scene was dramatized most recently in the film “Turkish Passport” (2011).

Many of Shaw’s claims were disproved by Rifat Bali in his *Turkish Jews in the Early Republic: An Adventure in Turkification, 1923–1945* (in Turkish, 1999), which presents evidence that far more Jews suffered from Turkish policies in World War II than were saved by them. Turkish Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe who had their citizenship revoked by the Turkish government were sent to camps where they were murdered. Since Bali’s study has not been translated, however, it has had no impact on Holocaust studies.

A decade after Bali’s study, Corry Guttstadt published *Die Türkei, die Juden, und der Holocaust* (2009; Turkish translation 2012). The original German version interweaves five microstudies: the history of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic; a critical examination of the nationalizing policies of the Turkish Republic; a history of the Sephardic Diaspora in Europe; the fate of the Sephardim in the Holocaust; and Turkey’s response to the persecution of European and Turkish Jewry. With its translation, the English reader has a critical account for the first time of the fate of Turkish Jewry in Turkey and Europe from the establishment of the Turkish Republic to the end of World War II. Guttstadt overturns the conventional wisdom that Turkey devoted considerable effort to rescue Jews; indeed, his documentation from fifty archives in eleven countries and from oral histories reveals vivid vignettes of horror that convince the reader that Turkey facilitated the Holocaust.

Shorn of its first 150 pages, the English version, especially in the introduction and part 1, sharpens the book’s focus to examine the Sephardim in the Holocaust and the role Turkey played in their fate, never letting the reader forget the nationalizing policies of the early Turkish Republic (1923–1945). Facing discrimination and violence, half of Turkish Jews migrated after 1923, mainly to France. The most traumatic events for the Jews in Turkey after 1933 were not a result of Nazi influence, but the outcome of homegrown policies intended to resettle and dispossess them, and decrease their role: the pogrom and expulsion from Thrace in 1934; the conscription into forced labor battalions from 1941 to 1943; and the Wealth Tax imposed between 1942 and 1944, accompanied by an
anti-Semitic press campaign. Those who could not pay the tax were sent to labor camps; some died.

Many studies have been devoted to the small number of German Jews who took refuge in Turkey during these years. Guttstadt emphasizes, however, that this was a lucky coincidence: in 1933 Turkey dismissed hundreds of professors, among them Turkish Jews, seeking to replace them as it established new universities. Turkey accepted less than one hundred German-Jewish academics, “for utilitarian rather than humanitarian reasons” (88); it refused to allow larger numbers of German Jewish refugees, turning down an appeal from Albert Einstein. Turkish institutions employed a far larger number of German Nazis.

Turkey took many measures to prevent Jewish immigration when European Jewry needed it the most. In 1937 Turkey began to deny entry permits to German Jews, since immigration was restricted to members of the “Turkish race.” In 1938 Turkey issued the “Decree on Precautionary Measures to Prevent the Entry of Foreign Jews in Turkey” barring Jews “who are subject to restrictions in their home countries” from entering Turkey “regardless of their current religious affiliation.” Turkish prime minister Refik Saydam declared in 1939, “Turkey does not permit foreign Jews to move here and refuses to grant entry to Jewish emigrants” (106).

Contra Shaw’s claim that Turkey allowed a hundred thousand Jews to transit through Turkey en route to Palestine, Guttstadt finds that the legal escape route “was enormously limited,” as just over ten thousand passed through from 1940 to 1944 (112). Jewish organizations utilized the dangerous illegal sea route instead. As Turkey did not allow the ships to dock, several unseaworthy vessels sank. Referring to the 768 Jewish refugees who died when the Struma sank off Turkey’s coast in 1942, the same prime minister stated, “Turkey cannot become the home of those who are not wanted by anyone else” (116).

Part 2, the longest section of the book, is the most significant part, offering a comprehensive account of the fate of the twenty-five thousand Turkish Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. Beginning in autumn 1942, Germany gave neutral nations an ultimatum to repatriate their Jewish citizens lest they be “included in the general measures regarding Jews,” which was known in Turkey to mean deportation and death. The Gestapo drew up lists of foreign Jews. Turkey was given nearly two years after the initial deadline to save them. But as Guttstadt explains, a rescue policy contradicted policies that Turkey was pursuing against Jews in Turkey. In order to prevent mass numbers of Jews from arriving, Turkey systematically revoked the citizenship of Turkish Jews in Europe. Turks who lost their citizenship were barred from returning to Turkey. They became stateless, and stateless Jews in Europe had no future. Turkey explicitly instructed its diplomats not to send Jews back “in large numbers”; as the Turkish embassy in Berlin informed the Nazis, “a mass immigration of Jews into Turkey” even those with correct papers, “was to be prevented” (157).

Detailed accounts of Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, southeastern Europe, and the Aegean Islands reveal that “scarcely any records of Turkish interventions on behalf of Turkish Jewish citizens can be found” (162). Most striking are the findings on France. When an honorary consular official gave identity papers to Jews, the Turkish ambassador in Vichy, Behiç
Erkin, reported this “improper behavior” to Ankara, launching an investigation into his actions. Since he “had acted for purely humanitarian reasons,” Erkin warned him to stop (199). As for Necdet Kent’s self-proclaimed role as a rescuer of Jews, no eyewitness testimony or documentation supports his claims. During the January 1943 raid in Marseille seventy Turkish Jews were arrested; Turkish authorities intervened and managed to get nine released. Guttstadt asks why these authorities would “demand the release of people who apparently had already been rescued” (221). Moreover, Kent’s own communications occurred after the train in question had already departed for the camps. One Turkish Jewish woman narrates escaping from the deportation train that Kent allegedly boarded. While at least two films have been made about Turkey’s repatriation of 314 of the 3,900 Turkish Jews in the northern zone of France (plus one hundred from the southern zone), Guttstadt reveals that during the same period seven hundred Turkish Jews were deported to death camps.

Guttstadt leaves the reader with a sobering tableau: 2,200 to 2,500 Turkish Jews were deported to Auschwitz and Sobibor; 300–400 were sent to various concentration camps, where many died. Neutral Turkey had extraordinary opportunities to save its Jews; we know that some Turkish consular officials, contrary to orders from Ankara, saved small numbers of Jews by recognizing them as Turkish citizens, or gaining their release from detention, although they were not always motivated by humanitarianism. Some officials, for example, demanded sexual favors and bribes in exchange for documents that the Jews had a right to obtain. Ankara issued laws and secret decrees to prevent the immigration of large numbers of Jews, stripped Jews of their citizenship, and prevented those who had lost their citizenship from returning to Turkey. This continued even when the Nazis demanded that Turkey repatriate its Jews, which Turkey did only in small part, allowing 800–900 to return, with the cost of their transfer paid for by Jewish organizations. Many did not want to return to Turkey, which, as they learned from relatives, had subjected Jews to forced labor and taxes, reducing many to poverty. After the war most of those repatriated in Turkey left that country. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Turkey “made relatively little effort” to save Turkish Jewry from the Holocaust, only once intervening at the ambassadorial level (313). Guttstadt’s shocking study will change the way we think about the role of Turkey in the Sephardic Holocaust. Replacing Shaw’s account, *Turkey, the Jews, and the Holocaust* will become a standard text in Holocaust studies.

Izzet Bahar’s study, *Turkey and the Rescue of European Jews*, an expanded version of his 2012 dissertation, covers the same topics as Guttstadt. His examination of archival records aims to determine whether Turkey allowed German-Jewish scholars to take refuge in Turkey out of humanitarian concerns; to ask whether Turkey endeavored to rescue Turkish Jews in France and other Jews persecuted by the Nazis; and to see whether Turkey allowed Jews to pass through Turkey en route to Palestine. His research, mainly utilizing published Turkish diplomatic records, offers only negative answers.

Bahar’s conclusions are practically the same as those of Guttstadt: Turkey demonstrated no intention to save its Jewish citizens in France until the end of
1943, when Germany’s defeat was imminent, and it allowed for only small numbers to be repatriated; the overwhelming majority of Turkish Jews, who did not possess citizenship, were given no protection by Turkish diplomats; Turkish diplomats carried out Ankara’s orders not to send large numbers of Turkish Jews, citizens or noncitizens, to Turkey; Turkish Jews were spared deportation for as long as they were, not by the actions of Turkish diplomats, but by the Nazi Foreign Office; the recent accounts of Turkish diplomats claiming to have saved Jews during the war are groundless. In short, the representation of Turkey’s actions is “erroneous, manipulative, and untruthful” (262).

Considering the great similarities between the two books, it is indefensible that Bahar does not mention Guttstadt in his introduction. The only detailed discussion of Guttstadt appears nearly half way through the book, and offers no discussion of how the earlier study relates to the later one (92–93). Ignoring Guttstadt allows Bahar falsely to claim that scholars have not until now subjected the myth of rescue to thorough archival investigation. He claims his study is based on “newly released” Turkish archival sources that are, however, already discussed by Bali or Guttstadt (13). Although many sections of Bahar’s book are nearly identical to sections in Guttstadt’s book in argument, figures, and sources cited, the former makes no reference in these sections to the latter. Bahar’s account is helpful, for it will contribute to dismantling the myth of Turkey’s rescue of Jews during World War II, and presents translations of Turkish archival material. Yet compared to Guttstadt’s study, one cannot argue that it is a completely original contribution to the literature.

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Academic interest in the study of sports, both in the humanities and the social sciences, has risen considerably in recent years, resulting in new and innovative scholarly work that provides greater insight into the role sports play in society. While the effects of sports in the construction of national, class, and gender identities have been widely studied, as evidenced by a firmly established bibliography, there remains a lacuna in Latin American historiography with regard to the ethnic aspect of sports, even in immigrant societies like Argentina.

Raanan Rein’s new book Fútbol, Jews, and the Making of Argentina constitutes an impressive attempt to fill that void and offers a groundbreaking study about the history of Argentina’s Jewish community from a unique perspective. By focusing on the history of Club Atlético Atlanta, a football club located in the porteño neighborhood of Villa Crespo, Rein examines the intricate relationship between sport, ethnicity, and community in a Latin American context.