JEWISH-TURKISH RELATIONS

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Category: Did You Know?

“It is a great and abiding myth that there is no anti-Semitism in Turkey , and that there is a special quality of tolerance in Jewish-Turkish relations that is absent elsewhere. This is based on the generous welcome the early sultans gave to Sephardic Jews leaving Spain under Catholic persecutions. It is a view projected strongly in some accounts of Jewish history in Turkey, particularly that put forward by the American Turkophile authority on the Ottoman Jews, Stanford Shaw. Yet as long ago as the Second World War there was substantial Jewish emigration from Turkey in protest against excessive, virtually confiscatory, taxation of the business community in Istanbul and other cities—a fact this is glossed over in Shaw’s work. His critics have accused him of neglecting the Armenian massacres in his view of Turkish history, an trying to build a pro-Turkish lobby among the politically influential US Jewish community.”—James Pettifer, “The Turkish Labyrinth”.

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