



The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot: Marranos and Other Secret Jews--A Woman Discovers Her Spiritual Heritage

Trudi Alexy

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Acclaimed in the *Progressive's* "Best Reading of 1993," these thrilling and harrowing firsthand stories of survivors and their rescuers vividly reveal the secret history of the Jews who found asylum from Hitler's Final Solution under Franco's Fascist regime.

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From Reader Review The Mezuzah in the Madonna's Foot: Marranos and Other Secret Jews--A Woman Discovers Her Spiritual Heritage for online ebook

Cristina says

I loved this book! I regret to say I was ignorant to much of this history before reading this book. I found it compellingly written and easy to read.

To the people who said the book wasn't as described the cover, I would say, "so what?" To me that is like tasting a delicious beer (I love beer, but feel free to substitute meal in this analogy) and saying it was very good but I wouldn't call it a Amber. The label clearly says Amber but I think it is more of an Porter.

There is a lot going on. The author talks about her own journey (as described the cover.) She also explores the journey of others whose journey is very similar and intersects with her own. Then she looks at that same period through the lens of those rescuing, as opposed to the rescued, of which she is one. And at the end she delves into some personal accounts of people who were the Secret Jews.

So if you want a book that is only about Secret Jews find another book. If you want riveting personal accounts of people fleeing persecution and finding succor in the unlikeliest of places, read this book!

I absolutely loved it!

Kilian Metcalf says

The title leads the reader to believe that it is a book about Marranos and other secret Jews. It isn't. Except for the the last 25 pages or so, the book is a collection of oral histories taken from individuals who fled the holocaust and survived by taking refuge in Spain, a country that expelled all Jews in 1492. The stories were interesting and harrowing, but have nothing to do with Marranos or crypto-Jews until the final pages.

The relationship between Jews and Spain is a long and complicated story. Part of it is covered in this book, and that makes it worth reading, but if you are looking for information about Marranos, look elsewhere.

Elizabeth says

I found this book absolutely fascinating. I knew things were bad during the Spanish Inquisition, but I had no idea they were that bad. The book made me want to find out more about current day Conversos.

Armando Garcia says

A very interesting memoir about the author's attempt to reconnect with her Jewish heritage

Meryll Levine Page says

The book was published in 1993 and shows its age, e.g. in the use of Marranos instead of anusim. The oral histories provide a fascinating portrait of Jews finding sanctuary in Spain as they fled Nazi persecution.

Gilahk says

Every year when we get to Holocaust Memorial Day I think what is there left to tell us about this, so many stories, books, movies, lectures - I thought I knew it all . And then I read this book.

I had no idea that Spain - the same Spain that threw the Jews out of their country 500 years ago effectively ending the Golden Age period for Spain and its Jews, that same Spain was a haven for Jews fleeing the Nazi onslaught in the rest of Europe. While France went along with the Nazi plan of rounding up the Jews, herding them into camps and exterminating them, in Spain, if they got there somehow, the Jews were protected. The stories in the book are first hand accounts of the many families who were saved, including the author's family..

I would give this book 5 stars but there is some sloppy writing as well as factual errors here and there.

This was a very heart-warming book, the kind that reaffirms my faith that people can be good and do the right thing even in the worst situations.

Randi says

Fascinating book about the history and the repercussions of the Inquisition.

Balloon Bruce says

Disappointing - couldn't finish it.

Jill says

What an appropriate book to read at this time when the leader of our country seeks to exclude an entire group of people based on their religion. This book has been on my shelf for a few years, waiting to be read. And now was the time to read about how the Spanish people legally expelled all Jews from their country. Five hundred years later, they are attempting to heal the breach and grant the descendants of those expelled the identity they were denied. If we do not know history, are we destined to repeat it?

Lauren says

Great premise for the book but was hoping for more. My favorite part was the author's discussion about her family's experience fleeing Czechoslovakia for France, then crossing the border to Spain. In many ways, the book is a tribute to Spain and its relative "open door" policy to Jews during the Holocaust. The rest of the book - stories of other Jews and some non-Jews - who were accepted in Spain during WWII, is interesting, but suffers from repetition and wordiness. The book could have been shorter and the message would not have been lost.

I learned things that I didn't know about Franco's Spain, and I appreciated that. If you are interested in a "not often told" story from that era, this book is worth the time.

Linda says

I liked it...learned a lot about Spain during WW11, there were a few too many stories that sounded so similar, it was a bit confusing. I wish there was a little more devoted to the Spanish Inquisition.

Shira says

This book was emotionally exhausting even before I was halfway through the book. Yet the journeys are incredible, first of a Czec girl who does not even see herself as Jewish until many years later, and then recounting the journeys and lives of many other Jews of Spanish origin, modern or medieval, and their often tense relationship with Spain. I'd not realized that Franco had ever, even if only during the last few years of the war, allowed or helped any Spanish Jews to come into Spain to escape the Nazis (yemach shemo). Even if it was only in the hope of using their international business connections to help the Spanish economy. :(

Elise Cohen says

"A very interesting modern history of European hidden Jews. There is an especially compelling, interesting section on the history of Jews fleeing to Spain during the Holocaust and their fairly warm reception there due to a lack of anti-Semitism as a result of the absence of Jews in Spain since the expulsion. Many issues and historically interesting points are raised that are not commonly found in other social or personal histories of the issue of hidden religious communities of the last 500 years."

Grace says

The title made me think there would be a lot more about 15th century Jews who converted, and became "hidden." Not much there, except a few interesting stories at the very end. This book was trying to do too many things and I think it got confusing about what the point actually was. The author is trying to prove that despite Spain having expelled all the Jews in 1492, Spain was welcoming, at least covertly, of Jews escaping the rest of Europe during WWII. But the few anecdotal stories didn't amount to a fully researched historical record, and though there were a few references to professors and their research, the concept seemed overall

unfounded. The title overstates what the book is.

Jack says

A wonderful written story.
