

UCLA LECTURE SERIES: JEWISH SARAJEVO

(2000)

On Sunday, March 12, 2000, Professor Moshe Lazar of the University of Southern California presented a free lecture about Jewish Sarajevo before World War II, under the auspices of U.C.L.A.'s Center for Jewish Studies. His Excellency Sven Alkalaj, Bosnian Ambassador to the United States introduced the subject to a packed audience.

Having recently emerged from the ravages of violent conflict, Sarajevo possesses a long history of peaceful multi-ethnic co-existence. Among the important elements of that mix was the Jewish community of Sarajevo, whose first major wave of settlers came from the Sephardic community of Salonika during the second half of the 16th century.

During the following century, the Ashkenazi Jews began making their way to the commercial center in Sarajevo. There, they were later joined by Jews from other Balkan lands as well as from Italy.

By the end of the 19th century—by which time Sarajevo had fallen from Ottoman to Austro-Hungarian rule, the city's Jewish population reached 10,000. That figure rose to 14,000 after World War I.

However, the tradition of mutual respect among the city's religious and ethnic groups was shattered during World War II, when Fascist allies of the Nazis attacked Sarajevo's Jews and presided over the destruction of the community.

Today, the Jewish community is struggling to reestablish itself.

The Center for Jewish Studies at U.C.L.A. with the generous support of Dr. & Mrs. Andrew Viterbi was proud to sponsor this ninth event in the on-going series on Great Jewish Cities. The series debuted in May 1996 with a highly successful lecture devoted to Jewish Vienna. Lectures on Jewish Vilna, Budapest, Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Salonika, and Paris followed.

It is the aim of the Great Cities series to explore the rich cultural diversity of Jewish urban life prior to the Holocaust. Understanding the vibrancy of Jewish life provides a measure of historical perspective for the enormous destruction that the Holocaust wrought.

Watch your mailbox for announcements of future Great Jewish Cities lectures.