

Irene Flunser Pimentel

Neutral Portugal and the Holocaust

Salazar and the German Ultimatum of 1943

In 1943, the Portuguese government found itself directly involved in the Holocaust when it was given the opportunity to decide the fate of Jews with Portuguese citizenship living in the occupied territories of France, the Netherlands and Greece, as well as those of Portuguese descent in Amsterdam.

The German Ultimatum

On 4 February, 1943, the German legation in Lisbon warned the Portuguese government that, “in the interest of [German] military security”, from 1 April, all foreign Jews, including those of Portuguese citizenship living in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, as well as in the Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, would now be subject to, “the provisions in force concerning Jews, including their marks of public identification, internment and later expulsion.” For “reasons of courtesy,” Salazar’s government was being informed so that it would have, “the opportunity to withdraw Jews of Portuguese citizenship from those territories under German rule.” Germany committed itself to authorizing exit visas to those who claimed Portuguese citizenship, if the Salazar government would grant them entry visas.¹ On 8 March, Salazar informed Count Tovar de Lemos,

1 AHDME Lisbon, *Arquivo Diplomático do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros*, 2.º P. A50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, “Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados, incluindo a França- 1943. Judeus provenientes dos seguintes países: Alemanha, Bélgica, Holanda, Grécia, Itália e França” collection of telegrams received and sent from and to the Portuguese legation in Berlin Telegrams received 2 February 1943; Public Record Office, London (hereafter: PRO London) HW 12–296, 3 March 1943.

Portugal's representative in Berlin, that the situation was being "carefully studied because it involved delicate issues," because of the, "corrupt or false origins of Portuguese citizenship which Jews claim or think they have."²

It is necessary to remember that beginning in the 16th century, many Sephardic Jews fled to Holland, France and Hamburg, where they were commonly referred to as "Portuguese Jews." Their synagogues and communities were also called "Portuguese". But because they left Portugal some 400 years before, they held no Portuguese citizenship. Another group were the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, and afterwards in Greece, especially in Salonika. Many of these Levantine Jews had emigrated after World War I to France. In the beginning of the 20th century they had acquired Portuguese citizenship. Until 1936, their registration in Portuguese consulates was usually renewed. However, Salazar's dictatorship suspended them, accusing Portuguese consulates in Turkey, Greece and Italy of granting citizenship illegally to "individuals of Semitic race."³

The Case of the Netherlands

When Germany conquered and occupied the Netherlands in 1940, 4,304 Jews of Portuguese descent lived in the country⁴. In a telegram dated 16 March, 1943, Salazar informed his Berlin legation that a Portuguese Jew of high standing had presented, "requests from Dutch Jews of Portuguese descent asking that he intervene in allowing them to leave the Netherlands."⁵

- 2 AHDME Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40. Collection of telegrams received and sent from and to the Portuguese legation in Berlin, Telegram sent by Salazar to Tovar de Lemos, Portuguese minister in Berlin, 8 March 1943, and 2 April 1943, from Tovar de Lemos to Salazar.
- 3 AHDME Lisbon, 2.º P., A.49, M.121-A, "A Questão dos Judeus Levantinos Portugueses em França. Relatório do Cônsul Geral em Paris António Alves. Janeiro 1943."
- 4 The number 4, 304 is cited by Yad Vashem, in "The Righteous Among the Nations," Yad Vashem, <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/calmeyer.asp>.
- 5 AHDME Lisbon. 2.º P. A50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, "Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados, incluindo a França 1943" collection of telegrams received and sent from and to the Portuguese legation in Berlin. Telegram sent to the Portuguese legation in Berlin, 3 March 1943, from Salazar.

The Portuguese Jew of “high standing” was Moisés Amzalak, president of the Lisbon Jewish Community.⁶ He presented, on 12 March, a cable to Salazar that he had received from Rabbi David Jessurun Cardoso of New York.⁷ The Portuguese leader informed Amzalak that he had intervened with the German minister in Lisbon, Hoyningen-Huene, who had promised that the Jews in question had nothing to fear, if they were Portuguese citizens. However, if they were considered Dutch Jews, they would be seen as enemies. With regard to the “individuals reclaiming ancient Portuguese origin,” as was the case with the Dutch Jews, the issue was different from that of Jews of Portuguese of recognized citizenship, as was noted in Germany’s February ultimatum. So Salazar asked Tovar de Lemos to clarify the situation of those Jews and, “to learn if the German government” would be willing to authorize the departure of Dutch Jewish families for whom Portugal could, “eventually recognize the ancestry they claim.”⁸ In another cable to Tovar de Lemos dated 28 March Salazar wrote that he had no additional information from the German legation. As we have seen, contrary to that statement, Salazar knew from Amzalak what was happening with the Dutch Jews and spoke with the German minister in Lisbon about the subject.⁹ Later, Tovar de Lemos sent Salazar a cable (n.º 110), informing him that Ernst Woermann, director of the political department of the German Foreign Office, told him on 2 April that only “Jews of Portuguese citizenship” were authorized to leave German occupied territories, and that the authorization could not be extended to “Jews of other citizenship, even if of Portuguese descent.”¹⁰ That same day, Salazar considered the matter

6 Relatório do Dr. R. Migdal, cônsul geral de Israel em Portugal, de Outubro de 1973, H. Avni, “L’Espagne, le Portugal et les Juifs sépharades au xx siècle. Propositions pour une étude comparée.” in Esther Benbassa, ed. *Mémoires Juives d’Espagne et du Portugal*, Paris: Publisud, 1996. 323.

7 A. Melo. “Morreram porque acreditaram que eram portuguesas.” in E. Mucznik, ed. *Estrelas da Memória*. Lisbon: Reborn, 2005. 210–211.

8 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, «Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados, incluindo a França- 1943. Judeus provenientes dos seguintes países: Alemanha, Bélgica, Holanda, Grécia, Itália e França.» Telegram sent to the Portuguese legation in Berlin, 16 March, 1943, from Salazar.

9 A. Melo. “Morreram porque acreditaram que eram portuguesas.” 192–193, 212.

10 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, «Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados, incluindo

closed, which meant that the Jews of Portuguese descent in the Netherlands were left to their fate.¹¹

After the war, the then new head of the Portuguese legation in The Hague, António Leite de Faria, calculated that only 500 members of the “Jews of Portuguese descent” in Holland had survived and that they were profoundly disillusioned by the fact “that our government could not assist their flight to Portugal,” and save them, “from the terrible destiny that awaited them.”¹²

Portuguese Jews in France

In 1939, only a few “Jews from the Levante” living in Paris were of Portuguese citizenship.¹³ They had been trying to renew their registration in Portuguese consulates, since 1936, when their registration was suspended. In a report from 1943, António Alves, the Portuguese consul in Paris, assured Salazar that, like his predecessors, he had continued to protect the 250 to 300 Jews in France registered in the Portuguese consulates.¹⁴

Following the German ultimatum, on 27 March, 1943, Salazar informed the legation in Berlin that the Portuguese consul in Marseilles asked the Portuguese legation for assistance with the repatriation of 31 “Portuguese Jews”.¹⁵ Because the number was so small, Salazar learned that the French

a França- 1943. Judeus provenientes dos seguintes países: Alemanha, Bélgica, Holanda, Grécia, Itália e França.», Telegram received from the Portuguese Legation in Berlin, 2 April, 1943, from Tovar de Lemos.

- 11 A. Milgram. *Portugal, Salazar e os Judeus*. Lisbon: Gradiva, 2010. 324–325; A. Melo. “Morreram porque acreditaram que eram portugueses.” 206–220.
- 12 H. Avni. “L’Espagne, le Portugal et les Juifs sépharades au xx siècle.” 212; A. Louçã. *Conspiradores e traficantes. Portugal no tráfico de armas e de divisas nos anos do nazismo (1933–1945)*, Lisbon: Oficina do Livro, 2005. 203–206.
- 13 A. Melo. “Monique Benveniste—Uma história com fim feliz.” in E. Mucznik, ed. *Estrelas da Memória*. 169–173, 193.
- 14 A. Milgram. *Portugal, Salazar e os Judeus*. 290; AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P., A.49, M.121-A; A Questão, “dos Judeus Levantinos Portugueses em França. Relatório do Cônsul Geral em Paris António Alves. Janeiro 1943.”
- 15 PRO London, HW 12–296 21 March 1943, nr. 115886 and 27 March 1943; M. Matos e Lemos, “Caeiro da Mata em Vichy,” in *CLIO, Revista do Centro de História da Universidade de Lisbon*, Nova Série, vol., 18/19, 2008/2009. 342.



A group of Jewish refugee children recently smuggled out of France arrive by train in Lisbon in September 1941.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives, courtesy of Isaac (Ike) Bitton

authorities were willing, “to look favorably upon the return of Israelites to their country of origin.” He had taken the “political and humanitarian stance” of “granting” them passports for Portugal. The consul in Paris stated that there were around one hundred Portuguese Jews seeking repatriation, while from Brussels the names of seven individuals had been communicated to Lisbon. Salazar authorized their travel to Portugal, but warned that the “high number of Jews indicated by the Paris Consul,” required an examination of whether those “Jewish families” had their “citizenship recognized in Portuguese documents,” so that the number would not be “so inflated” that it would lead one to “believe in abuse.”¹⁶

On 21 April and 26 May, 1943, the Portuguese government gave to the Germans two lists with 109 Jews, 99 in France and 10 in Belgium, sent by

16 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P., A.49, M.121-A; “A Questão, dos Judeus Levantinos Portugueses em França. Relatório do Cônsul Geral em Paris António Alves. Janeiro 1943.”

the consuls in Paris and Brussels. Upon transmission to Adolf Eichmann, the lists unleashed a controversy between the German Foreign Office and Portuguese officials over assets Jews were authorized to take to Portugal.¹⁷ In the end, they were able to transfer capital to provide for their upkeep. In July 1943, the Portuguese ambassador in Vichy asked the Germans to authorize the departure of 57 Jewish Portuguese citizens. The consul in Marseilles sent a list of 38 persons with legal documentation, wishing to leave for Portugal.¹⁸

In early September 1943, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) office in Lisbon informed its central office in New York about the arrival in Portugal, on 2 September, of a first group of 40 Jews, who would be followed by 70 more.¹⁹ These individuals, who were now living in *residence forcée* (fixed residence) in Curia, a spa north of Coimbra, had been permitted to bring their personal belongings. They left France with 15 British pounds in bank notes, and a check worth 20,000 francs, which no Portuguese bank would honor. The JDC determined that all of them had lived and worked in France for many years, and asked the Allies to facilitate their “entry into liberated French (Algiers) or Allied territories” until liberation and their return to France after the war ended.²⁰

Jews with Portuguese passports residing in France thus ended up arriving in Portugal in three groups. After the first group of 40 persons, the second one, with 43 to 45 Jews, arrived on 16 October.²¹ The third, with 52 to 54 individuals, arrived on 1 November, 1943; the sources differ on whether

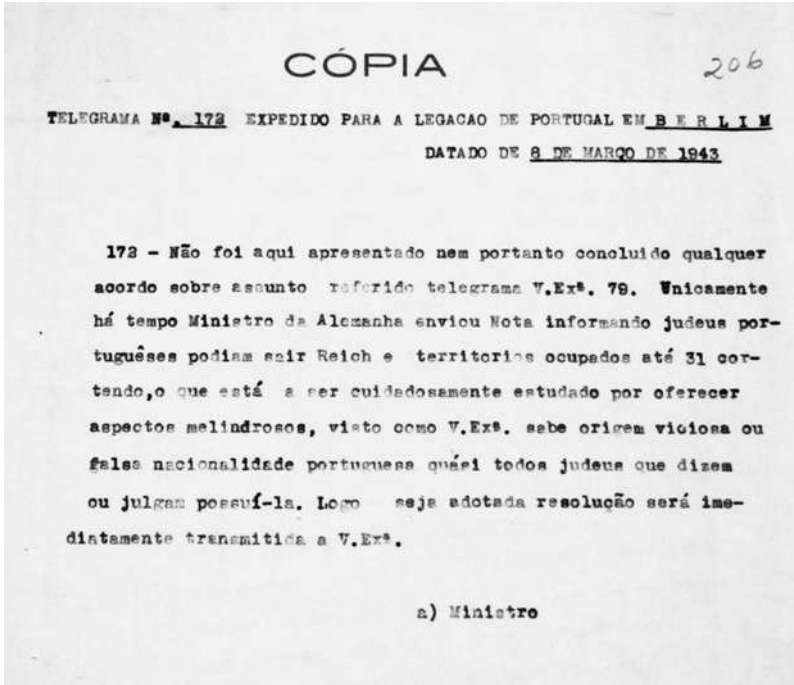
17 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P., A49 e 50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, “Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados, incluindo a França- 1943...”; collection of telegrams received and sent from and to the Portuguese legation in Berlin. Telegrams sent to the Portuguese legation in Berlin, 27 March, 1943 and 25 May, 1943, from Salazar to Tovar de Lemos.

18 M. Matos e Lemos. “Caeiro da Mata em Vichy.” 342–344.

19 “*Liste des juifs portugais actuellement à Curia.*” 40 persons, JDC Archives, Portugal, 897.

20 American Joint Distribution Committee, Lisbon, to JDC, New York, 21 Sept. 1943, JDC Archives, Portugal, 896.

21 Letter from Herbert Katzky to JDC, New York, 16 November 1943; “*Liste des ressortissants Portugais autorisés à franchir la frontière franco-espagnole par Hendaye à destination du Portugal, autorisation collective,*” n.º 19372, *délivrée par l’Ambassade d’Allemagne en date du 14/10/43—52 individuals,*” JDC Archives, Portugal, 897.



Copy of a telegram from the Portuguese Foreign Ministry to the Portuguese Embassy in Berlin, 8 March, 1943, saying that the Foreign Ministry had not yet decided how to respond to the German repatriation ultimatum. The telegram explains that the embassy would be notified as soon as a decision was made and that the issue was sensitive because nearly all claims of Portuguese citizenship by Jews were suspicious or forgeries. *Portugal. AHDMNE Lisbon. 2.º P. A50, M40.*

the total is 135 or 139 Jews. Even so, the director of the “Police of Vigilance and Defense of the State” (*PVDE—Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado*) stated that it was necessary to conduct a thorough review of their identity, and proposed allowing entry into Portugal only to those who brought money and could, in fact, prove that they were Portuguese. This time, however, on 11 March, 1944, the Portuguese Foreign Ministry stated that when it was “impossible to immediately determine” who had Portuguese citizenship, their entry into Portugal should be authorized on the condition that they leave should it be proved that they were not in fact Portuguese. Finally, on 27 June, 1944, a last group of 47 Jews left France and arrived in Portu-

gal.²² Initially housed in “fixed residence” in Curia, those considered Portuguese citizens could later freely stay wherever they wished in Portugal.²³

The Case of the Portuguese Jews in Greece

When the Axis occupied Greece in 1941, about 77,000 Jews were living in Greece, but their fate differed depending on whether their area of residence was occupied by Bulgarians, Italians or Germans. Because Athens was occupied by the Italians until September 1943, thousands of Jews fled from the German-occupied areas to the city, and the pre-war Jewish population of the city rose from 3,500 Jews to between 8,000 and 10,000.²⁴

The largest Jewish community in Greece was in Salonika, where the Portuguese consulate was closed on the 15 December, 1942 by Germany.²⁵ Then, in February 1943, the Germans concentrated Salonika’s Jewish population into two ghettos. Between March and August of that year, between 43,850 and 48,533 Jews were deported to either Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka, where most of them were killed upon arrival.²⁶

On 27 March, 1943, Salazar was informed by Germany’s Lisbon legation that foreign Jews from neutral countries could leave Greece until 15 June. Soon after, Portugal’s Berlin minister wrote to Salazar saying that only six Jews there sought repatriation, but he required further instructions. This was because their Portuguese citizenship was in doubt, because the registration of four of them had been done in 1939 at Portugal’s consulate in Port Said in Egypt. The other two had done this at the consulate in Athens in 1933, possibly illegally.²⁷ In response, the Portuguese dictator

22 A. Milgram. *Portugal, Salazar e os Judeus*. 292.

23 Letters from American Joint Distribution Committee, Lisbon, nr. 445, 21 Sept. 1943, and nr. 593, 16 Nov. 1943, JDC Archives, New York/Jerusalem, Portugal.

24 http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/historical_background/greece.asp.

25 PRO London, HW 12–282. 111567, Portuguese Consulate, Salonika, to be closed by Germans 25 Dec. 1942 “Most secret telegram” from the Portuguese minister in Berlin to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, nr. 373, 26 Nov. 1942.

26 http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/learning_environments/salonika/salonika.asp.

27 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P., A49 e 50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, «Repatriação de judeus portugueses residentes no Reich e territórios ocupados,

telegraphed instructions authorizing the repatriation of those six, if they met the “specified conditions.”²⁸

Germany’s Lisbon legation later informed the Portuguese government that, “due to reasons of a police nature,” it became, “necessary to immediately deport all Jews in Italy and Greece”. As a precaution, i.e., in the event that some Jews were of Portuguese citizenship, the German government presented two solutions—their repatriation to Portugal, “or being placed in a concentration camp in Germany for the purposes of examining their documentation and the right of those involved to return to their countries.”²⁹ The Portuguese government communicated to its Berlin legation that it had replied positively to the repatriation option, but that, “due to the known doubts” concerning the “basis of the alleged citizenship of many Israelites,” had asked German authorities for the “Jewish documents to be examined.”³⁰

In the meantime, after Italy’s surrender to the Western Allies, Germany occupied the previously Italian part of Greece on 8 September, 1943. Later, on 5 May, 1944, the German Foreign Ministry sent the Portuguese legation in Berlin a list with the names of 16 Jews in Athens, and then another with three names, asking if Portugal was willing to repatriate them.³¹ On 9 May, the US embassy in Lisbon sent a memorandum to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking that, on “humanitarian grounds, all rights, privileges and immunities granted” to its citizens should be extended to Jews in Greece reclaiming Portuguese nationality.³²

incluindo a França- 1943....;» a collection of telegrams received and sent from and to the Portuguese legation in Berlin. Telegram received from the Portuguese legation in Berlin, 30 April, 1943.

28 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A49 e 50, M40, *Repartição dos Negócios Políticos*, telegrams sent to the Portuguese legation in Berlin, 6 April, 1943.

29 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A49 e 50, M40, *Repartição dos Negócios Políticos*, German legation in Lisbon, *Aide-mémoire*, Dec. 1943.

30 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P., A. 49, M.121-A; A Questão, “dos Judeus Levantinos Portugueses em França. Relatório do Cônsul Geral em Paris António Alves. Janeiro 1943.”

31 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A49 e 50, M40, *Repartição dos Negócios Políticos*, Telegrams sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, to the Portuguese Legation in Berlin, 1943.

32 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40, *Repartição dos Negócios Políticos*, telegram from Salazar to the Portuguese Legation in Berlin, 23 June, 1944.

According to Avraham Milgram, the US memorandum on Portuguese Jews living in the former Italian area of Greece who faced deportations changed the Portuguese attitude.³³ In fact, on 16 June, 1944, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs urgently requested that its Berlin legation assist in the repatriation of Jews with Portuguese nationality from Greece.³⁴ Milgram writes that the 19 Jews from Greece never arrived in Portugal. In fact, after being deported from Greece along with hundreds of other Greek, Italian and Spanish Jews, on 2 April, 1944, they arrived in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Afterwards they were transferred from there to other destinations, and were finally liberated by the US troops.³⁵

However, Nair Alexandra writes that 16 of these individuals, born in Greece and living in Athens, were sent by the Germans to Bergen-Belsen, and from there were directly repatriated to Portugal, in July 1944. This group, and three other Jews, crossed into Portugal on a collective passport.³⁶ On 11 July Portugal's Berlin legation informed Lisbon that 19 Jews would be sent to the French-Spanish border, in a train transporting British citizens, to be exchanged for German citizens in Lisbon.³⁷ Three days later, those 19 Jews left German camps, but Almeida Pile of the Portuguese Legation in Berlin told Lisbon that they had arrived in Vittel, France, too late to travel on the train with British citizens.³⁸ However, António Melo writes that when the repatriation order was received, they had already been deported to other camps, but they survived. On 4 March, 1945 they were in Bergen-Belsen, which had not yet been liberated. Later, the Portuguese consul in Antwerp informed Lisbon that the first five had arrived, and would be followed by the other 14.³⁹

33 A. Milgram. *Portugal, Salazar e os Judeus*. 324–325.

34 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P, A50, M40, Telegram from Salazar to the Portuguese Legation in Berlin, 16 June, 1944.

35 A. Milgram. *Portugal, Salazar e os Judeus*. 325–326.

36 N. Alexandra. “Judeus ibéricos no Levante: Salónica.” in E. Mucznik, ed. *Estrelas da Memória*. 225.

37 PRO London, HW 12–296: 132763, 20 June 1944; 133005, 27 June 1944; 133217, 2 July 1944; 133781 and 133785, 18 July, 1944.

38 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40, Repartição dos Negócios Políticos, telegrams sent from Berlin to Lisbon, 11, 14 and 29 July, 1944.

39 AHDMNE Lisbon, 2.º P. A50, M40, information from the *Swedish American Life*, 4/3/1945, and the cônsul Coelho de Sousa, Antwerp; A. Melo. “Os sobreviventes de Bergen-Belsen.” in E. Mucznik, ed. *Estrelas da Memória*. 199.

Meanwhile, on 28 July the Portuguese Legation in Berlin sent Salazar another list of 13 Jews from Greece whose repatriation had also been requested the previous month.⁴⁰ This second group had been confused with the group of 19, but, in fact, with the exception of the Salmona family, listed in both groups, the other members of the first group had different names. The fate of this second group is unknown, but there is a handwritten note, probably from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter from Tovar de Lemos in Berlin, urging Lisbon to do everything possible in order that those Jews could follow the same path as those of the first group.

Some Concluding Words

It can be argued that Portugal demonstrated different attitudes towards Jews depending on whether they were considered of Portuguese descent or Portuguese citizens. Regarding the Jews in Holland who tried to claim their Portuguese descent, Lisbon did not recognize them as citizens and did nothing to save them. Regarding the so-called Levantine Jews with Portuguese documentation in France, Lisbon accepted the repatriation of the majority of them, especially in Paris where the consuls could confirm their citizenship after time-consuming negotiations, even though not all could prove they had correct papers.

However, regarding the Levantine Jews in Greece, Salazar was suspicious of his consuls in that country (Lencastre de Menezes, removed in 1938), and in Italy (Alfredo Casanova, in Rome, and Agenore Magno, in Milan). He accused them of having illegally granted Portuguese passports to Jews, and therefore only permitted the repatriation of a tiny group of 19 Jews. This happened thanks to pressure applied by the US Embassy and the Apostolic Nunciature, after it was certain that the Germans would lose the war. As always, the negotiations took a long time, and they had already been deported when the repatriation order finally arrived. They were saved by the Allies.

We may then ask if Portugal, as a neutral country, was a “bystander,” a “rescuer” or a “perpetrator” nation. I prefer to use the concept of “the

40 Their names were Sotir Canetti, Saltiel Salomão, Maria Saltiel Sarrano, Salomão Benrubi, Salomão Flora, Moisés e Lúcia Benveniste, as well as Elie, Lea, José and Flora Salmona.

grey zone,” as conceived by Primo Levi. As is well known, Levi used that concept to include the various attitudes regarding the Holocaust, which revealed a lack of empathy with human suffering in extreme situations, but which cannot be considered positions involving complicity with the crime, nor active resistance to it. Included in this grey zone, for example, were the neutral European countries, including Portugal. Clearly various “shades” of behavior were at the heart of Salazar’s regime itself.

If we consider the Portuguese in general, we see, with the exception of a few far-right intellectuals, military and police officials, a “black” complicity with the Third Reich, but general antisemitic attitude did not prevail. We also see a few who were in the “white zone” of resistance to the Nazi regime and who sought to help its victims. One of these was Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux. He was responsible for saving most of the Jews who crossed the Portuguese border in June 1940. But he was punished for disobeying the Portuguese dictator, whose regime after the war would cynically state that Portugal had been a safe harbor for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.

When analyzing Portugal’s economic, financial, commercial and political relationships with Nazi Germany, we can conclude that its actions fall mostly within the grey zone. Salazar and his government did little to save the lives of those persecuted, and no direct assistance was offered to the refugees, although he allowed aid organizations to operate in Portugal. Nor did he denounce the persecution and massacres carried out by the Nazis. The fact that most of those in power navigated in this grey zone made Portugal a transit country for some refugees, but even this number is lower than could have been expected, given the dangers the Jews faced. Regarding the matter of the “repatriation” of Jews of Portuguese descent in 1943 and 1944, Portugal fell very short of what it could have done, saving only a small number who could prove their citizenship. In light of the magnitude of the crimes perpetrated by German Nazis and by their accomplices, the Portuguese government’s position—during a war in which it remained neutral—fell tremendously short.