



La America: The Sephardic Experience in the United States

Marc D. Angel

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The story of the Jewish immigration to the United States in the early years of the century has been fully described in a variety of publications. Less well known is the story of the more than 25,000 Levantine Sephardim who entered the United States between 1899 and 1925. La America, the Judeo-Spanish-language national weekly newspaper founded in 1910 is a welcome contribution to an understanding of this long neglected aspect of the American Jewish experience. Rabbi Angel discovers in the newspaper reports and editorials and brings to the readers' attention the fascinating heritage of American Sephardic Jews. From The Jacket In researching an article about the Sephardim of the United States, which appeared in the American Jewish Year Book of 1973, I scanned through a number of issues of La America, beginning in 1910. As I quickly reeled through the microfilms of the newspaper at the New York Public Library, I recognized at once that there was a brilliant, vibrant mind behind them. . . . In 1979, I obtained a set of the microfilms of La America and spent many hours each day reading and copying. The work consumed me. Moise Gadol ; was editor of La America, the first Judeo-Spanish newspaper published in the United States, and as I read his writings that had appeared from November 1910 until July 1925 I felt I was coming to know the man personally. . . . Moise Gadol was perhaps the greatest voice of the immigrant Sephardic community during the years in which La America appeared. He was a heroic figure, although seldom appreciated by many of his contemporaries. . . . This book is primarily a study of the Judeo-Spanish-speaking Sephardim of New York from 1910 until 1925 as seen through the eyes of Moise Gadol and his newspaper, La America. On its pages we can see firsthand the struggles of the Sephardim to adapt to a new way of life. This is the story of a people and of one man, the description of a sliver of history with ramifications that transcend time.

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