



# Of No Interest to the Nation: A Jewish Family in France, 1925-1945

*Gilbert Michlin*

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Gilbert Michlin's sober text thoroughly documents the story of a Jewish immigrant family in France during the war years. Known as the country of enlightenment and human rights, France drew many Jews from Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century, including Michlin's parents, who fled the harsh conditions of Poland in the mid-1920s. Michlin's memoir evokes the golden years of his family's life in prewar Paris, where he was born, but also reflects on the difficulties of being Jewish in France. His father learned this when French authorities rejected his request for naturalization on the symbolic pretext that he was "of no interest to the nation." The rise of Nazi Germany, the German occupation of France, and the advent of the Vichy government and its anti-Jewish laws would soon follow, and in 1944 the Michlin family would be deported to Auschwitz.

Very little memoir material is available in English detailing either the French Jewish experience during World War II or the experience of immigrants in France in the 1930s. *Of No Interest to the Nation* is a valuable book for students and scholars of Jewish and European history, the Holocaust, and European immigration during the first half of the twentieth century. First published in France in 2001, this translation also includes an afterword by Israeli scholar Zeev Sternhell, which provides incisive comments that place Michlin's memoir within the larger context of contemporary French history.

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