

UU STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON 1930'S REFUGEE STORIES

INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION

Close to one million people arrived in Europe in 2015, fleeing from war and seeking security in Europe. Today's massive refugee crisis raises painful historical echoes and observers make the connection with Europe's 1930's refugee crisis: "Today, to our shame, Anne Frank is a Syrian girl." (NYT, Aug. 2017, N. Kristof). The Jewish refugees are the most known persecuted group of refugees in the 1930's. The persecution in Nazi Germany caused a massive exodus of Jewish and political refugees, many of whom fled to France. It is less known that in the same decade, the Francoist persecution in Spain also forced 500 000 Spanish citizens to take refuge to France. Once in France, some Spanish refugees obtained a refugee status but most of them were interned in improvised refugee camps, others went into hiding or tried to escape to America. Once the Nazis occupied France, German and French Jews, and other groups considered "undesirables" also had to go into hiding or find ways to escape France. The "undesirables" who were caught, were sent to French transit camps, together with the Spaniards, and deported to Nazi concentration camps such as Ravensbrück or Mauthausen. At the same time, other Spanish refugees joined the French Resistance.

In this exhibition and conference, we look at the 1930's refugee crisis through the lens of Spanish women. UU students of the course *Border crossings (Cruces de fronteras BA Spaanse taal en cultuur)* interact with the exhibition of egodocuments by Spanish women in French exile by offering visual presentations, from a contemporary perspective, on the life stories of these refugees in transit in France.

In the conference, we focus on the analysis of life stories and autobiographical writings by the Spanish women refugees who fled to France. What image of France is reflected in the egodocuments by the refugee women? How do the refugee women represent their experiences, identity and agency in the French refugee camps, in French society, and in the Resistance?

This international conference and interactive exhibition sharpen our perspective on today's refugee crisis.

Website: <https://fenix.sites.uu.nl/events/spanish-women-exiled-in-france/>