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Towards a geography of persecution: The case of the Arts-et-Métiers and the Enfants-Rouges quarters of the third arrondissement of Paris, 1940-1946

ABSTRACT

The field of Holocaust studies has recently taken a spatial turn, borrowing concepts and tools from geography. Whereas these spatial studies of the Holocaust focus mostly on killing sites and places of persecution specifically created or repurposed by perpetrators (e.g. camps, ghettos, trains...), spaces of everyday life, such as homes and neighborhoods, have been largely overlooked. In Western Europe, Holocaust perpetrators did not segregate Jews in ghettos before deportation, and thus the first stages of anti-Semitic persecutions affected Jews in the ordinary city. In this dissertation, I will examine the effects and consequences of anti-Jewish persecution during German occupation on the geography of two quarters of Paris, the Arts-et-Métiers and the Enfants-Rouges quarters, and I will investigate the ways in which persecution affected the spatial practices, the spatial experiences, and the social relations of the Jews of these neighborhoods. My investigation will consist of a convergent mixed methods empirical study using both testimonial information produced by the victims of persecution as well as archival sources produced by perpetrators. During the quantitative phase, I will build a Historical Geographic Information System (HGIS) in order to document and analyze the presence (or absence), the fate, and the situation of Jewish individuals and families in my study area, as well as their persecution (especially deportation and material dispossession). In the qualitative part of the research, I will analyze testimonies of survivors who lived in my study area during the occupation period to uncover their spatial and experiential dimensions as well as to relate them to patterns uncovered in the quantitative phase. This dissertation aims to contribute a new dimension to spatial understanding of the Holocaust, to shed light on the interplay between place, space, and social relations in the context of genocide, and to contribute to the theorization of the geography of persecution.